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A
DISCOURSE
OF
Toleration:

In Answer to a late BOOK,

[by John Corbett]
Intituled,

A DISCOURSE

Of the

RELIGION of ENGLAND.

By Richard Perrinchief

By R. Perrinchief

ROM. 16. 17.

Now I beseech you Brethren, mark them which cause Divisions, and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them.



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ERRATA.

pAge 3. l. i. read *men*. p. 4. l. 25. r. *succeeding*, p. 6. d. 12. r. *extraft*, p. 21. l. 37.
r. *inrefifting*, p. 22. l. 11. r. *Law*, l. 12. r. *the Emperours*, l. 30. r. *bad*, marg.
p. 23. l. 11. r. *that*, p. 32. l. 37. r. *Discomfer*.

A
DISCOURSE
OF
TOLERATION.

SECT. I.

To form a right Judgment of Toleration, it is necessary to consider the subject of it.

THere is so much malignity in our corrupt Nature, that Detraction and envious Reflections are easily believed; and we daily see one man sport at the loss of anothers Fame. This corruption appears in nothing more than in the case of Magistrates; to speak ill of whom, is mistaken for *Liberty*, whilst the commendation of their just actions scarce escapes the infamy of *flattery*, or servitude. Hence it is, that Writings which pretend to plead the cause of a Party, whose Interest is judged inconsistent with the publick, have a great vogue, because they do insinuate the ill management of Superiours, imply their Want of Love to the Truth, Ignorance of their own Concerns, and Cruelty to the Innocent. And such are Discourses for *Toleration of Dissentions in Religion*, which finde acceptance with weaker Spirits, because they are both prone to pity even those that suffer justly, and have too jealous a fear of those that are in power.

But yet to do right to our humane nature, we must acknowledge, that though it be corrupted, yet is not the Light of it wholly extinguished; nor hath it utterly lost its Notices and Inclinations to good, though it may sometimes be deceived by its own passions in the pursuit of it: so that when any thing is discovered to be ill in its *nature*, the product of some infa-

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mous *causes*, and attended with *consequences* of ruine, then reason will prevail (unless some base lust hath wholly debauched the Soul) and vindicate it self from the impostures of a mistaken interest: And however men may be kinde to a *Toleration*, when it is considered barely, as a bearing with Dissenters; moderating the Rigors of those whose fortune, and power tempts them to an insolency; as it is a pity due to the Infirmities of mankind which is subject to erre; and hath a semblance to the Meekness of Christianity; yet when they consider the subject of it, which are *Dissentions in Religion*, whose prime causes are for the most part hateful, and the consequences terrible, they will boggle at it, as being that which will quite enervate Religion, and also shake, if not overthrow all Societies. To form therefore a right Judgment of *Toleration*, we must first consider the *Nature, Causes, and Events* of the Subject of it.

S E C T. 2.

The Nature of Dissentions in Religion.

WHat *Dissentions of Religion* are in their nature is best known by reflecting upon the wayes and means which Christ hath appointed for the maintenance, and continuance of Religion in the World.

Our Blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ* having purchased a great Salvation for Mankind, and made known the means of obtaining what he had acquired, that this knowledge might be propagated through all Ages to those that were capable of his benefits, did establish a *Society* which should be conservers of these truths, into which all those that did believe what he had done and said, and would submit to those conditions he required, upon the solemn profession thereof by Baptism, were to be admitted, without any distinction of State, Sex, or Nation. And this is *his Church*. That this Society might perform its Office, and be preserved to this great end, *Unity* of the Members among themselves was more necessary for it then for any other Community, because it was for greater and more glorious

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rious ends than ever any Society of man was established for ; and without *unity* it could not possibly attain these ends : For if those who pretended to shew men the way of Life, did disagree among themselves, were divided into several factions, mutually abhorring each others Communion, and condemning each others for false or defective Churches ; how could those who were without believe the truths which all pretended unto, and yet every one did mutually deny to be found in another ? since these truths (not like those which Philosophers pretended unto, that were but the Collections of mens Observation, and Conclusions of Discourse) were all asserted as such which had been revealed by the most Wise and Faithful God, and were the manifestations of the pleasure of his Will, wherein was no place left to humane invention : every pretender contending, that what he delivered was *spoken at first by the Lord*, Heb. 2. 3. and confirmed to following ages by those that heard him.

Besides, those who some way or other had convictions of the truth of *Jesum*, and desired to be more fully instructed in that way, and to do those duties which Christ commanded one Christian to do with another : these I say, must be much distracted (being yet Babes and Novices in Christ, and so supposed not able to determine) by reason of all those controverlies of the different parties with whom they might joyn themselves unto the Lord : so that without this Unity the Church cannot perform those great ends for which it was instituted by our Saviour.

Therefore to preserve this Unity, Christ hath done all those things which he thought necessary for it. He poured out prayers to his Father *That all those that believed on him might be one, and be made perfect in one*, Joh. 17. 21, 23. He hath ordered that the Supplies of his Spirit should be administered by their *holding of him their Head, and by being fitly joyned, and compacted together*. Eph. 4. 16. He hath so dispensed the gifts of his Spirit in that way and measure, that the *Members* of his Body might have the same dependance, the same benefits as one member of a natural Body hath from another, and so conserve so strict an Unity, as may entitle the Church to the Honour of his Name, and be called *Christ*. He commands them to maintain their Unity by a constant, and fre-

1 Cor. 10. 16, 17. quent *Communion* of his *Sacraments*. What weight hath he put upon his command of *Love*, the principle of *Unity*, and there is no duty more pressed by him and his Apostles, than those of *Unity* and *Peace*. Yea, all those Precepts of *Long-suffering*, *Gentleness*, *Goodness*, *Meekness*, *Patience*, are in order to this great end of *Unity* among the Professors of his Doctrine. Thus the necessity of *Unity*, and methods by Christ, appointed for its preservation, must needs argue *Dissentions* (which are destructive of it) to be of a nature hateful to every soul that hath a true sense of *Christianity*.

SECT. 3.

The Causes of Dissentions and Schisms in the Authors of them.

Rom. 16. 18.

2 Cor. 3. 3.

Gal. 5. 20.

Phil. 3. 19.

1 Tim. 1. 19.

ib. c. 6. 4.

Tit. 3. 11.

BUT besides this, they are more odious in their causes, whether we consider the first *Authors* of them, or the *Followers*. As for the *Authors* of them, the Apostles set forth them to be persons led by such motives as did abandon all respect to Christ, that *They served not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly*. They were called *carnal*, *Seditions*, and *Heresies* are reckoned amongst the works of the flesh. They are said to be the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame. The putting away of a good Conscience, and making shipwreck of the Faith is their character. Pride and covetousness are said to be their grand principles. Subversion and Sin is their state of Life. S. Peter, and S. Jude give them characters full of horror. Thus in the succeeding ages of the Church, the Historians who give us an account of those Heresies and Schisms which arose in it, do also tell us how great Monsters they were which did bring them forth; and there was in every Sect many opinions and practices that rendered all Christians (of whose number they pretended to be) odious even to the Heathen. The abominations of the *Gnosticks* are not to be named even by a sober Heathen, for the vilest acts of uncleanness which would dishonour even a Stewes, were taken up by them for Duties of Religion, which shewed the causes of their dissentions to be exceeding hateful.

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It would be tedious to survey all, and give a particular account of the *causes* of every Sect. One instance will be sufficient, and it shall be that of the *Donatists*, a great and lasting dissention, which had a complication of Wickednesses to bring it forth into the world. It began at the Election and Ordination of *Cacilianus*, Bishop of *Carthage*, whereby the ambition of *Botrus* and *Calesius*, two Presbyters of the same Church, and Competitors of the same Dignity, being disappointed, to depose him they conspire with other Presbyters, to whom *Mensurum* the preceding Bishop had in the times of persecution delivered the Church-Plate, to be kept private, that it might not be a spoil to the Persecutors; these men had refused to deliver to *Cacilianus* (to whom at his Ordination the Inventory of Church Goods was given up) the things committed to their trust; and that they might ascertain the prey to themselves, they laboured to draw the people from Communion with the Bishop. This separation was forwarded by one *Lucilla*; a rich woman, who having been displeased with *Cacilianus*, because when he was a Deacon, he had admonished her to behave her self as the other Christians in the publick Worship, she continued her passion to him now made a Bishop; and by her gifts and promises corrupted others, that they should depose *Cacilianus*, and set up in his stead one *Majorinus*, who lived in her house. To strengthen this Separation, they call to *Carthage*, *Secundus*, Bishop of *Tigista*, Primate of *Numidia*; who, together with other *Numidian* Bishops in a Council at *Cirta*, had mutually convicted one the other, to have been *Traditores*, (i. e. such who had delivered up the Holy Scriptures to be burnt by the Gentiles;) and so having pardoned one the other, that they might not be questioned by the other Churches of *Africk*, did willingly embrace this occasion of making and completing a Schism at *Carthage*, whereby also they might hide their Indulgences one to the other at home, by their severity to others abroad, removing from themselves the suspicion of that Crime, which they condemned in others. These men being entertained at *Carthage*, by those whom Ambition, Anger, and Covetousness had made factious, did condemn *Cacilianus* unheard, as being ordained by

by *Felix* Bishop of *Aptungita* who was accused to have been a *Traditor*, and then set up *Majorinus* in his stead, and so formed that Schism, which for a long time troubled all *Africk*, and polluted it with much blood. This one instance is enough to shew how *Dissentions* in Religion may, and sometimes do owe their Original to the lusts of men, and that evil Affections, though different and various, may yet amass men together in the same Schism; and that however we hear of nothing now (as it was probable they did so then) pretended for a dissent, but Conscience: Yet we know that men live and dye by the same rules, and the same lusts in this age will work as they did of old in the same circumstances; and whatsoever is of such an extract must needs be hateful.

SECT. 4.

The Causes of Dissentions in the Followers.

AS for the *Followers* of these *Dissentions*, although it is possible many of them may be led aside in the simplicity of their souls by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness of such as lie in wait to deceive, yet we find the Scriptures often censure such of *lusts* also, which give them over to the arts of those who lead them captive. As an *Averseness* to the sound doctrine which contradicts their lusts; an *Affectation* of Novelty, having itching ears, or of too much Liberty, greater than will comport with the Discipline of the Truth: An affectation of some more then ordinary knowledge, thus the Apostle saith, some were beguiled by things which had a shew of wisdom. St. Jude saith that the Hereticks of his time did speak great swelling words, by which he implied the *Gnosticks*, who did abuse the people with a strange noise of words that signified nothing, but their followers imagined to have the secrets of wisdom. And thus St. *Augustine* saith, that he was a follower of the *Manichees* for 9 years together, (having sleighted the Religion his Parents had educated him in), and that because they promised not to require any mans faith, unless they made the truth clear and evident; and therefore this captivated him, being

Ephes. 4. 14.

2 Tim. 3. 6.

2 Tim. 4. 3.

2 Pet. 2. 19.

Col. 2. 18. 23.

Jude 16.

Aug. lib. de
Vulgate cred.
 c. 1.

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being young; and when he was by reason of some knowledge in the disputes of the learned *Garrulus* and *Superbus*, i. e. talkative and proud. Another cause may be a want of love to the Truth, 2 *Thes.* 2. 10. Hence comes their *Loathing* all pains that are necessary for the searching after the Truth, and from this a *Compliance* with those opinions that are importunately imposed upon them by their Relations. Add to these the *Envy* at those whom the Providence or Spirit of God hath advanced either by more *useful* Graces, or to more *splendid* conditions, (this was it which made much of that noise which was in the divided Church of *Corinth*). *Weakeness* in not differing between the *Lives* and *Professions* of those that continue within the Church, (so *Audius* as *Epiphanius* saith began his schism) and sometimes *Injuries* received from those that are for the Truth, make morose and cholerick minds joyn themselves to those that are Enemies. Thus the calumnies which some of the *Roman* Clergy spread of *Tertullian* as a *Montanist*, made him in truth after imbrace that Sect. The *advantages* also that a man may promise to himself in a Party, which he cannot hope for in a peaceable Church.

These and many other may move a man to herd himself in a factious Congregation, and to separate from an established Church; and therefore *Conscience*, though it be generally pretended, is not the only cause of Dissentions in Religion. And indeed, how can it otherwise be imagined of the far greatest part of *Dissenters*, but that as the Scripture saith, *They are laden with diverse lusts*. When they trample upon so clear, and frequent *Commands* of our Lord Jesus Christ to follow after *Peace*, and *Unity*, and those things that tend to Edification, and stick at some thing that either is not commanded, or not forbidden by God, and therefore left to the Magistrates liberty, or which is but *obscure* and *doubtful*. When they swallow great sins, (as *Perjuries*, *Rebellions*, *Falsenesses*) and yet strain and scruple at an *indifferent Ceremony*. When they place so much of the essence of Religion and the *Worship* of God, in the forbearing an indifferent Rite, that they think God is profaned by it, and refuse Communion with those that so worship him. When they precipitate themselves

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selves either through *Envy*, *Passion*, or *Design*; into the several Sects of dissenters, without a *search* after the Truth, and so ignorantly that they know not what it is they embrace, but only that it is *contrary* to what they have *forsoaken*. When their Separation is attended with so many *works* of the *flesh*, (as bitterness, evil-speaking, slanders of those who disagree, lies to support their way, reproaches of the Government, cruelty against their opposites when in their power, and those bloody undertakings to destroy the lawful Magistrate). How is it possible for us to think that *Conscience*, and a fear of God is the only Principle of those Dissenters? for if that was the great rule of their actions, they would walk by it in those other things wherein there is no occasion of scruple: and therefore it is to be concluded, that though it is possible for some good souls to be deceived, yet the far greater part are first blinded and manacled by their own lusts, and so are led captive by deceivers.

SECT. 5.

The Consequences and Effects of Dissentions, as to Religion and the Church.

NOW since the *Causes* of Dissentions in Religion are in themselves so wicked, how can we but fear that their consequences will be full of horror? for, what can these spawn but misery and destruction? By them the truth of Christianity is dishonoured, for the reason our Saviour gives of his Prayer for Unity among his Disciples was, that the world should believe that his Father had sent him; i. e. that he came from God, and therefore what he said was true; therefore the dissentions which should happen among them, would give a colour of unbelief to the world, and they would be apt to conclude, that God was no way the *Author* of that which was full of strife. The Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, that the disorders which were among them would persuade *Unbelievers* to say they were mad, 1 Cor. 14. 23. The *Contentions* in the first ages of the Church were the sport of the Gentile Theaters,

Joh. 17. 21.

Theaters, and every unhallowed scorner made the strifes of Christians the subject of his mirth. *Origen. con. Cels. lib. 3.*

They also obstruct men in the embracing the Faith, as was shewed above, and therefore *Celsus* upon this account did reproach the Christians, as if ** they envied the world, the acknowledging the Truth, because they no longer increased their number, but their Dissensions were also multiplied.* Thus they hinder the Propagation of the Gospel, and forbid those that otherwise would come into the Church. *ἐπὶ οὗτοι οὐκ ἐβουλόμην ἵνα ἐκείνην τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀποκρίνωμαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἐβουλόμην ἵνα ἐκείνην τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀποκρίνωμαι, ὅτι οὐκ ἐβουλόμην ἵνα ἐκείνην τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀποκρίνωμαι.*

They corrupt also those that are within, and hinder the Growth of Grace, which every member ought to promote both in himself and others; for the Apostle having said of the *Corinthians*, that they were enriched in all knowledge, and so having a plentiful portion of the Spirit, he might have expected to have found them *Spiritual*, grown up to some perfection in Christ, yet by reason of their divisions they were still but *Babes*, still carnal. For Divisions and Dissensions in Religion do hinder both the inward and the outward means whereby Christians may grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Inward is that *renewal* that supply of the Spirit which is given to every man to profit the Church withal, *1 Cor. 12. 7.* And it is said *Ephes. 4. 16.* that *From Christ the whole body fitly joyned together and compacted, by that which every joynt supplies makes the Increase of the body to the edifying of it self in love.* But dissensions hinder this way of supply, for either they break the Continuity of the body, as violent winds tear off the branches from the trunk of the tree, which effect the Apostle insinuates when he calls Heresies, *winds of doctrine, in vers. 14.* of the same Chapter: Or else they stir up such humours of *Wrath*, and *Malice*, which like rough obstructions in the veins, and vessels of our bodies, hinder the current of blood and spirits: so do these hinder that supply of spiritual nourishment that one Member should afford unto another. For all those *Parts* and *Abilities* which God hath given, with all that *Time* which might be employed in converting men to Holiness, in reconciling Souls to God, in persuading men to break off their sins by Repentance, are spent, and wasted in Bitterness,

and evil speaking one of another; in mutual Contradictions, perverse Disputings, doting about questions, and Strife of words, in making Profelytes to the factions rather than in turning them to God, in teaching them the Principles of the party, rather than instructing them in the Oracles of life. Then as to the *Outward* means of edification, which is the *Assembling of Christians together*, (for the Apostle *Heb. 10. 24.* having admonished the *Hebrews* to *consider one another to provoke unto love and good works*, presently adds as a means to this, *Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together*; the joyning in the Worship of God, being the most powerful conversation which can possibly beget love and good works of one to the other). This likewise is lost by factions; for where there are these dissensions, Altar is set up against Altar, and Congregation against Congregation, and in stead of *Provoking to love, and good works*: men are enraged to Malice, and Destructive designs against the dissenters.

For that is another sad effect of these Dissensions, they do imbrutish mankind, make them *heady, high-minded, fierce, dispisers, and contemnners of others*, from doting about *Questions*, and *strife of words* comes railing, envy, evil-surmises, and at last they come to the severest Cruelties, for such have been practiced by the *Arians, Donatists, Circumcelliones, and Papists, &c.* And how unfit are such souls for an habitation of God through the Spirit? How incapable do they become of the Image of the Lamb, who was lowly and meek, and whose voyce was not heard in the streets? These are the mischiefs they do to Religion, the injuries they bring upon the Church; but they stay not here.

SECT. 6.

The Consequences of Dissensions as to the Civil State.

FOR they vex the State also, which being Christian, cannot be safe while the Church is in a Tempest. The mutual contendings of the divided Parties disturb the Publick Peace,

Peace, distract the People with fears; how far the malice of the more prevalent will reach; and the several vicissitudes of Success on the different sides hinder the common Settlement, and represent new terrors. In Ecclesiastical Histories, we often find the great Cities of the World in flames kindled by *Dissensions in Religion*, the Streets running with blood, Churches broke open to let in some new Intruder, and Armies called to succour the Community, and stint the rage of the contending Sects, and the *Gentiles* though unconcerned which part had Truth, yet felt themselves involved in the Contentions of both.

But the mischiefs they bring upon a State are most evident in those Injuries they do to *Princes*, and *Magistrates*; who cannot be distressed with Difficulties, but the whole Community under them must have sensible Miseries. Dissensions are injurious to them, as they take away that mutual Confidence which ought to be betwixt all the members of the State, and more especially betwixt the Prince, and People: (without which confidence a Nation can never do any great thing;) men do not easily and willingly trust those whom they do not think faithful to God, and so every Schismatick looks upon his Prince that doth not profess the same Opinions with himself. Hence comes it to pass that he is obstructed to any great design; *Constantine* complained that he could not wage his War against *Persia* when the Heresie of *Arius* did so perplex his Empire. For he might justly have feared that other effect of Dissensions, which is, that they give Occasion to some Ambitious Spirit to gain the Affections of the more sleighted Sect, and so fit himself with a Party to endeavour at Tyranny: for pretending their Protection, and defence of their Cause, he might drive on his own designs for a greatness not due to him. Besides, Dissenters in Religion are fit Instruments for an Invading Enemy to weaken the force of a Nation, by pretending Kindness to the discontented Sects, who easily are cheated to think Changes will prove Remedies, and vainly hope for those favours from a Foreigner which they despair of under their Lawful King. Nay, sometimes the discountenanced Dissenters raise an Ambition where they

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found none; for it is usual with them to give *immoderate* praises to all of their side, especially to any Great man, whom they have chanced to deceive; and so by swelling him to a Pride, flatter him to attempt at Power, that he may vindicate them from their imaginary Oppressions.

SECT. 7.

What the Magistrate should do as to Dissentions.

THUS having seen the *Nature, Causes, and Effects* of Dissentions in Religion, that they are directly *contrary* to the *Interest* of the Gospel, that they are derived from *Lusts, and Corruptions*; and at best they are the *Infirmities* of men, which first give them a being, and afterwards nourish them, that their *Effects* are as base as their *Causes*, and also pregnant with misery both to Church and State. We may now proceed to form a judgement of *Toleration*.

First, I conceive all will grant that Every man in his Place and Order is bound, to remove all such things as are so dishonourable to Religion, obstructive to true Piety, and pernicious to Church and State; for his Obligations to his own *Profession*, his Interest to provide for his own *Peace and Safety*, and his *Love* to his *Countrey*; require no less from him: and indeed this every Sect doth practice, and endeavour; for while they labour to draw all to their own party, they plainly declare they would have no dissentions.

Then it follows, that *Magistrates, Kings, and Princes*, and all concerned in the *Legislative, and Juridical* power of their own People; are likewise obliged to the same endeavour. For must *Kings* sit still, and be the idle spectators of injuries daily acted against the Religion they profess, be quiet in their own *Dishonour*, and their peoples *Misery*? and must they patiently see their *Cities, and Communities* rendered more unsafe than a Wilderness, and more unquiet then herds of Beasts? shall not a Prince labour to prevent the contempt of Religion? bind up the wounds of his divided State, stop the avenues to all ambitious Usurpation? but this cannot be done, unless it be his

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Power and Right, either to prevent these Dissentions; as much as he can, or *restrain* and remove them if they do arise. And were it not *Lawful* for Christian Princes to do so, their condition must be far worse by becoming Christians, than when they were strangers to the Faith; and they would be losers as to their temporal Rights, by falling down before Jesus Christ: which is contrary to the will of our Saviour, who hath commanded his followers to give them all their *Dues*, their *Fear*, and *Honour*; nay, no man either loses or gains any temporal Right by embracing the Faith; and therefore we are not to think, that when our Lord would have *Kings*, and all that are in *Authority*, come to the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved, that he intended they should forfeit their just rights, and part with that Power that should keep their People in a due Subjection: For by the *Law of Nature*, Princes have power to use all just means to keep their people in peace, and to be Ministers for their good. But if becoming Christians they may not use their power to restrain dissentions in Religion, it is not possible for them to secure the peace, and preserve the weaker from the more strong, and violent; nay, nor guard their own just Rights from those who will attempt at Tyranny.

How also can the promise of God be accomplished, by which he assures the Church, *Isa. 49. 23. That Kings shall be her nursing Fathers, and Queens her nursing Mothers*. If those who have the supream Dominion cannot preserve it from the greatest *Pests* that she is obnoxious unto, and defend her from those things which will at last bring a *Famine of the Word*, by which she lives. And how can the Christians hope for that end of their Prayers, that *Kings should acknowledge the truth*, since if they have no power to restrain Schisms, they cannot secure them in a quiet and peaceable life.

It is said by those who are afraid that Princes who differ from them, should concern themselves in the care of Religion, that the Magistrate may do his Office towards the propagation of Piety by his own *Example*, *Profession*, and *Munificence*. But alas, however effectual the *Examples of Kings*, if bad, are to the licencing of *Vice*, yet Experience shews how little,

little, *though good*, they prevail to an Imitation of *Virtue*, especially in a *Corrupt* Generation; for such cannot bear even with the *Virtues* of *Heroical Princes*. Besides, the *Slanders* which the several *Sects* raise upon a King that differs from them, blunt all the force of his Example, and draws even his noble Acts to occasions of Jealousie. Moreover, it is an unusual way of *Governing*, in things of so great Concernment as Religion is, only by *bare examples*: When *Corruptions* are strong and high, vigorous *Laws* only can give a check unto them. Nay, the first thing that *Schismatics* and *Hereticks* are taught, is to *Despise* Kings, and cast off all reverence to *Princes*; as those that have so much of the *World*, that they have nothing of *Christ*. And although the personal profession of a King, may be an encouragement to the Truth; yet it is no provision for the Peace: for the neglected *Sects* will through envy encrease their animosities against the indulged party, and so lay aside that reverence which is due to the Prince, as a *Common Father*, and look upon him with that indignation as is used against a professed Enemy. As for the *Munificence* of Kings to the Religious they approve, it doth more enrage the *Factions*. *Constantine's* Charity to the *Catholicks* in *Africk* that communicated with *Cacilianus*, first heated the *Schismatics* to libel against him. Had not the *Liberality* of our *Ancient* Kings raised *Bishops* above scorn, and put them in such State, as kept off contempt together with want, they might have been as quiet now as a *President* of a *Presbytery*, or a *German* superintendent, notwithstanding their pretensions to sole power in *Church* affairs. But now the favour of the Prince is a mark for envy, and if He hath no other Guard for his peace, his *Goodness* shall summon troublesome, and envious Spirits to *Mutiny* and *Sedition*.

 SECT. 8.

That a Toleration is not the way to our Peace, and Settlement.

THUS it being proved, that the *Magistrate* is obliged, and hath a rightful power to restrain *Dissentions* in Religion,
and

and to hinder those destructive and sad Consequences which necessarily flow from them, and that he cannot attain his end either by his *Example*, *Profession*, or *Munificence* to what he judges to be truth: I conceive it follows, that he must use the most proper *Means* of all *Government*, which are good and wise *Laws*, and a due *Execution* of them when made. What these *Laws* should be, is not for *private* and *particular* persons to prescribe: (this was the itch in the late Confusions, and did increase them;) but is to be left to those whose Province it is, whose *Advancement* above the common *Level* gives them the best prospect of the *Inconveniences*, and *Necessities* of the people, whose *Experience* in the ways of *Conversation* can suggest what is most suitable; and being *Ministers* of God, for this very thing, may expect his *blessing* for their direction. The Undertaking therefore of this discourse is not to determine the use of *Power*, but to shew that a *Toleration* of *Dissentions* is not (as is pretended in several Pamphlets) the way to the peace and happiness of this Nation: Because it cannot remove the Causes of our Distempers, nor hinder the destructive Effects of them. For if these *Dissentions* are, as it is said, the wretched causes of our want of *Settlement*, and it can be proved that a *Toleration* of them will make them neither less in *Number*, nor in their *Malignity*, how can it be thought that we shall be any thing the better for a *Toleration* of them. I shall therefore, 1. Give some reasons in general, that a *Toleration* will not remove *Dissentions*, nor hinder their effects. 2dly. That a *Toleration* is not for the Interest of our Nation at this time. 3dly. I shall answer the reasons which are urged for it.

 SECT. 9.

That a *Toleration* is not the way to remove our *Dissentions*, nor to hinder their effects.

1. **U**NLESS it were evident, that the men who speak and write for a *Toleration* do plead their own Interest, which commonly imposes upon the understanding, we might won-

A Discourse of

wonder how they could ever imagine, that a Toleration were the only way to waite Dissentions, or make them languish as to their malignancie; that we should have more Peace by permitting the Breaches of it, and come to a Settlement by encouraging our Distractions. If indeed it were plainly acknowledged that all these Dissentions grew from a Spirit of Contradiction, then perchance a Toleration might suffer them to languish in their own fury, and waite for want of Opposition: and by leaving men to their own giddiness, let them come to Quietness by their fall: But then this may render the Condition of Princes despicable, who must purchase their peace by the Prostitution of their Authority; and get Obedience by giving no Commands. But this Love of Contradiction, although it be sufficiently implied to go a great way to the effecting of our Dissentions, (since it is so common a maxime among the Dissenters, that an Indifferent thing becomes unlawful by being commanded) yet this is not publickly professed; and therefore is not urged for a Toleration.

But Conscience is most pretended to be the cause of our Dissentions, To take of this pretence, it is not necessary, and it would be tedious, to discourse how vain are the Pretensions of the greatest part of Dissentions to Conscience, and how difficult it is for the Dissenters to make out their Pretensions, and what measure of Liberty is to be afforded to them. Our subject requires no more then to show, that a Toleration of Dissentions that pretend to Conscience will not abate either their Number, or their Effects. For the Conscience which is pretended to colour Dissentions, is either Erroneous, or Dubious, or Scrupulous; because in many Dissentions about the same thing, the Consciences of one party only can be guided by true and certain Principles, all the rest must be abused by Errors, Doubts, or Scruples. Now although it lies not in the power of mortal men to keep the Consciences of others free from any of these. Yet they may take of all Inconveniences to Error, and so make men more Diligent in the search of the Truth, when it will not be safe to Deceive or be Deceived. They may also restrain men from proposing their doubts and scruples to the trouble of weak Consciences, the disquiet of the Church, and

and the scandal of those who are without. And for this they have the practise of the Apostle for their rule, Who commands the *Christians*, and *Churches* to do all that in them lay to hinder such things as did administer to Contentions, as by *Withdrawing* from them and *Rejecting* them; which are the expressions of *Excommunication*, the greatest punishment the Church could inflict. Thus he commands *Timothy*, ^{1 Tim. 6 4, 5.} *To withdraw himself from men that doted about Questions and strifes of words, and those men of corrupt minds, who were given to perverse Disputings.* He commands *Titus*, ^{Tit. 3, 9, 10.} *To avoid foolish Questions, and contentions, and strivings about the Law, for they are unprofitable and vain, and to reject a man that is an Heretick.* He commands the Church of the *Romans*, to receive the weak in faith, but not to doubtful Disputations, and yet the things which were among them disputed seem to be of greater moment, pretended as much to Conscience, as the Dissentions among us do, and he gives this rule to every Christian, how he ought to manage his differing opinions of things in which the Kingdom of God is not, *Hast thou faith, have it to thy self before God*; a man was not to publish his opinions, however perswaded in his Conscience to the hinderance of *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*, all which, Dissentions doe certainly hinder.

This was the Apostolical course to remove Dissentions that pretend to Conscience, which if they be tolerated must needs increase, for the *Itch of disputing*, *Opiniastrere*, desire of *victory and applause*, and the *increase of Congregations*, which are Infirmities that stick close to the flesh, even of Conscientious men, will maintain if not multiply the Dissentions. And if they are maintained, What security can there be to the Church and State, that their effects will not be as violent and destructive: For, it is a vain speculation to think, that men who differ upon Principles of Conscience, will not by the same Conscience be prevailed upon to endeavour the Propagation, and enlargement of their way, and if they do so, it must be with the depression of others, who equally contend for the same with them, and then whatsoever *Ambition, Anger,*

or *Revenge* can find as means for it, shall be sure to put in practise on both sides.

But if Dissentions (as hath been proved) have for the most part no other Original than *Lusts* both in the *Authors* and *Followers*; Can we hope that Carnal desires will grow modest by being Tolerated, and languish under a *Permission*? That men will then certainly grow good, when they may without fear of the Magistrate be evil? And that then they will learn peace, when they have an Indemnity for being contentious and quarrellsome? *Lusts* are hardly retrench'd even by severe Laws, but they will certainly grow wanton, and be more cursedly fertile in all their wicked effects when a Law licenes them.

SECT. 10.

Instances of Dissentions increased by a Toleration.

* Am. lib 22.

*Dissensiones
Christianorum
antistites cum
plebe discissa in
palatium intro-
missos movebat,
ut civilibus
discordiis con-
sopitis quisq;
nullo vacante,
Religioni suae
Serviret inre-
pidus. Quod
agebat ideo ob-
stinatè, ut dis-
sensiones augen-
te licentiâ, non
timeret unacui-
mantem posse a
plebem: nullas
inestas homini-
bus bestias, ut
sunt sibi ferales
pleriq; Christi-
anorum, expe-
tue.*

THUS therefore, whatsoever the Causes of Dissentions are, it is plain that a *Toleration* of them neither lessens nor softens them; but this being to be a matter of *Fact*, the best judgment we can form of a thing that is to come, is to consider how the same thing was in times past; and if we consider the *Instances* of a Toleration in former Ages, we shall soon perceive what we are like to hope for from it, if now it should be put in practise.

The first *Instance* shall be that Toleration of *Julian* the *Apostate*, who though at the beginning of his Usurpation, to delude the *Christians* to an acquiescence under his Empire, he did profess Christianity, and observed their Solemnities; yet when *Constantinus* was dead, then he openly applied himself to set up the *Idolatri* of the *Gentiles*. And that he might do this with ease, and without fear of the *Christians*, by his Edicts he gave a publick liberty to all and every *Sect* of the *Galileans*, (for so he called the *Christians*). To what purpose *Anianus Marcellinus*, who was one of his Courtiers and Officers, and of his own Religion tells us, for he saith, * *He did this with so much the more Industry, that Toleration and Licence increasing their*

their Diffentions, he need not for the time to come fear that People would agree together, he having had experience that no Beasts are more savage to men, than most of the Dissenting Christians are to one another. How far he attained his end, the murder of *Georgius* the *Arrian* at *Alexandria*, the Tumults about *Athanasius*, and the suffering of the *Orthodox* there, the Insolencies of the *Donatists* in *Africk*, the commotions at *Antioch*, and the frequent Apostacies, are sufficient Evidences of the mischiefs of his Toleration; yet he when he gave it pretended Kindness and Peace; for he admonished them to lay aside their Civil Discords, and that everyone without fear or contradiction from any, should observe his own Religion. It is no great credit for Toleration, that this man's practise is proposed for a pattern, by the Author of a Proposition for Peace and Happiness, who to abuse Page 152 the Age to an inclination of Imitating him, calls him *Wise*, and *Brave*, (though with an allay of *Cursed* and *Apostate*). Which is no great wonder, since every Sect commends those of their own Judgment: and it appears that that Author is not acquainted with the History of that *Usurper*; for if he had, he must have censured him for a vain and light-headed person, and must have known that the Toleration he granted, and not his Contempt of Christians, did them the greatest mischief.

Another Instance is that of the *Donatists*, the Authors of which were before spoken of. This Schism began at the Conclusion of *Diocletian's* Persecution, about the year of our Lord 306. For the space of six years after they employed all their arts to root themselves by spreading abroad Calumnies of *Cacilianus* in all the Churches of *Africk*, and by confirming in frequent Synods their Sentences against him, and all that did adhere unto him. But when *Constantine* began to shew his greater care of Christianity, and granting several Privileges to the several Churches, did likewise among the rest take care of the *African*, and commanded *Anulimus* the Pro-Consul, that he should exempt the Clergie of the Catholick Church there, of which *Cacilianus* had the care, from all Publick, and Civil burdens or Services: and had also in his own Letters to *Cacilianus* commended unto him the dispensing of his Charity to the poor of *Africk*: this honour

done to him enraged the envy of the Schismatics. They thereupon exhibit to *Anulinus*, a Book of Articles against *Caciliannus*, which they desired might be transmitted to *Constantine*; and not content with that, send some of theirs to prosecute the charge. This being matter of great trouble to that good Emperour, he refers the cause to several Bishops, and afterwards calls a Council at *Arles*, in all which the *Donatists* were condemned, and *Caciliannus* quitted. This Judgment so far provoked them, that they sleight the Sentences of the *Referees*; and Council, disobey the Emperour's Command, That they should not without his permission return to *Africk*, & they also prosecute him with Detraction, as being corrupted by the *Catholicks*. He being justly incensed by these Indignities, commands their Churches to be taken from them, and themselves to be banished.

Yet about four years and an half after, whether overcome by their importunate Petitions, or being willing to apply himself wholly to the business of *Arius*, he remits their banishment, but with such expressions, as shews he did abhor them; for in his Letters that left them to their Liberty, he calls them *Pessimos*, & *Christiane pacis inimicos*; i. e. Most vile men, and Enemies of the Christian Peace; and he is said therefore to have taken off their Banishment, and to have permitted them to their own fury, *Quia jam cepit Deus in illos vindicare*. i. e. Because God had begun to take vengeance of them. From this time they grew more restless, and came to that height by the time of *Constans* (to whose part of the Empire, *Africk* did belong) that as *Gratus* Bishop of *Carthage* in his return from the Council of *Sardia* informed him, the Church of *Africk* was in a miserable condition, by reason of the *Donatists*; For by their followers the *Circumcelliones*, they did resist the Governours of the Provinces, and wandering through Towns, Villages, and Fairs, pretended to be the Restorers of Publick Justice, and upon that account, they suffered none to be secure of their Possessions, they did set slaves at liberty to injure their Masters, and delivered Debtors from the Creditors, burning the Bonds betwixt them, and many other acts of injustice. He therefore advised that Emperour, that though there was little hope of reducing the Leaders of the Factions, yet if he would send some

Brevic. Coll. Di.
3. cap. 6.

Aug. Ep. 152.

some Ambassadors thither to perswade the People to Unity, and to this end bestow some Charity among the poorer sort, he might possibly prevail to draw them off, and weaken the Schismaticks. *Constans* follows the counsel that was given, and sends *Macarius*, and *Paulus* to disperse his Charity among the People, and to perswade them to Unity. The *Donatists* fearing the effects of this Charity, write to all their Sect, that they should not receive the money from the Ambassadors, and stir up the *Circumcelliones* to assault them with force; upon which *Macarius* in order to his own safety, gets some Bands and Troops for his own Guard, who slew many of the Phanatick Invaders in their attempts, and having murther'd their boldness, the Council was gathered; called the first Council of Carthage, which did again condemn them.

But it was not long alter, that *Constans* was murdered, and so those *Donatists* returned to their old Infolencies being not (as is probable) restrained by *Constantinus*; because they had joyn'd themselves to the *Arrians* whom he favoured. But when *Julian* the Apostate had gotten the Empire by Petitioning, and flattering that professed Enemy of Christianity, with whom (they said) Righteousness only had place, they gained that power, where by they drove the Orthodox from the Churches, in those places where their number was most prevalent, and committed many Slaughters where they could not be resisted, violated the Virgins, that professed Chastity, put out the Eyes of some, cut off the hands, and pull'd out the tongue of a certain Bishop: burnt the houses of private men, fired the Churches, cast the Scriptures into the flames; and committed so many crimes as made that place and Generation miserable and infamous. The following Emperour *Valentinian* did nothing to suppress them, only set forth an Edict against their Rebaptizing, and that without any Molest at all. His son *Gratian* did also forbid the same, and Command that those places only which they had taken from the Orthodox in the Rebellion of *Firmus* should be restored. These neglects of the Emperours, either busied too much with the Cares of the declining Empire, and imployed in the Resisting the rising Tyrants, were not much different from a

Aug. Ep. 48.
apud eum sola
iustitia locum
haberet.

Aug. Ep. 50.

Toleration. And in that time the *Donatists* grew to that Greatness and Security, that they fell into Factions, the *Primitivists*, and *Maximianists*, and being secure from all Laws against them, they were so bold as to make Laws themselves, that is one Faction of them against the other; for the *Primitivists* sent a Cryer to proclaim at *Sinis*, that *Whosoever should Communicate with Maximianus, his house should be burnt.* At this time their Number was so great, that the *Catholics* in the time of *Theodosius*, (who made no Law against them in Particular, but only against Hereticks in General, which Laws the two Sects pleaded one against the other,) were afraid to deal with them by the Laws of Emperours which were against them; and the *Pro-Consuls* being terrified by the violence of the *Circumcelliones* thought it most safe to Tolerate them.

But notwithstanding all this, when *Honorius* the Son of *Theodosius*, who succeeded him as to the *Western Empire*, made a severe Law against them, and bound the Governours of the Provinces under the same penalty as was to be inflicted on the Criminals if they did not execute it; it did so much contribute to the Unity of the Church, that *Saint Augustine* in his *Epist.* 48. to *Vincentius* an Heretick saith, *He*

Aug. Ep. 48. *O si possem tibi ostendere, ex ipsis Circumcellionibus quam multos jam Catholicos manifestos habeamus, damnantes suam pristinam vitam & miserabilem errorem, quo se arbitrabantur pro Ecclesia Dei facere quicquid inquietate meritate faciebant: qui tamen ad hanc sanitatem non perducerentur, nisi legum istarum quae tibi displicent vinculis tanquam phrenetici ligarentur.*

could show him many, even of the *Circumcelliones* (the fiercest Zealots of the *Donatists*) now become manifestly good Catholics, who did condemn their former conversation, and miserable Error, whereby they thought all that their rash fury had made them do, was

done for the good of the Church of God: who had never been reduced to that Soundness of Mind, but by the Laws that were made against them. And again,

ib. *Quam multi ex ipsis nunc nobiscum gaudentes, pristinum pondus perniciosis sui operis accusant, & fateantur nos sibi molestos esse debuisse, ne tanquam mortifero Somno, ita morbo veterioso consuetudinis interirent.*

How many of them now Rejoycing with us do accuse their former Practices, and Confess that we ought to have been thus troublesome to them, lest they had perished in the Disease of their former

former Conversation, as in some deadly sleep. And in his Epist. ad Bonifacium, He saith, That when those Laws came into Africk, those especially who did wait for an occasion, but were either afraid of the Cruelty of the Phanatics, or were unwilling to offend their Relations, did immediately joyn themselves to the Church. Many also who were joyned to the Donatists by a Custom delivered to them from their Fathers, but had yet never understood what cause there was for that Heresie, and never intended to search and consider it; yet then when they began to inquire into it, and found nothing in it, yet should deserve an adherence even to suffering, they without any difficulty became Catholics.

Aug. Ep. 50. Jam vero cum ista leges venissent in Africam, & precipue illi qui querebant occasionem, aut sevitiâ insequentium metuebant, suos verecundabantur offendere, ad Ecclesiam continuò transferunt. Multi etiam quò solâ illic à parentibus traditâ consuetudine tenebantur, qualem vero causam ipsa Hæresis haberet, nunquam antea cogitauerant, nunquam quærere aut considerare voluerant, nunc ubi capere ut adverterent, & nihil dignum in ea invenire propter quod tanta dampna paterentur, sine ulla difficultate Catholici facti sunt.

So that after these Laws that Sect did daily decline, and the more obstinate Reminders of them joyn'd themselves to the Goths and Vandals that then invaded Africk, or else were mingled among the Pelagians, an Heresie that arose about those Times. This instance shews how Toleration and Connivance doth not diminish dissensions in Religion, and how wholesome Laws do serve to Unity.

But were we without all other instances, we cannot forget what was the issue of Toleration in our own Nation and our own days. That Faction which designed the ruine of our Church and State, aiming to get a party for themselves, after they had quite overthrown all, whose Cares were to be for Discipline, did then give Liberty to all tender Consciences; By which the Dissensions of Religion were so far increased, that it was the wonder of all considering men, how it was possible so few years could produce such a prodigious Catalogue of Heresies. All these also were carried on with the usual Effects of Schism. The Independents fastening Antichristianism to the Presbyterians. The Anabaptists charging the Independents of some relics of the man of Sin. The Seekers damning all for Apostates. The Antirationalians and Socinians daily belabouring our Blasphemies against the Son, and Holy Spirit of God. The Antinomians calling off the Law of God, and the Quakers all Light to walk by but

but their own. How was every house filled with Strifes and Contentions, and even the very Foundations of Unity and Society, which are Families, torn in pieces. In every Town almost which was capable of two Preachers, one *Presbyterian*, and another *Independent* were planted there; like the *Roman* Malefactors, condemned as it were by the Factious, to *Dispute*, and *Preach*, and *Strive* one with the other for the greatest Congregation. Hence became they the sport of Atheists and Papiists. How often did the contending Sects give Disturbance to the *Authors* of their *Liberty*; sometimes declaring for them, and another while bemoaning their *Lukewarmness*; forcing the *Usurpers* to all their Arts, now to cajole one Sect, and to *morrow* to comply with another. The *Remainder* of the Parliament is one while adored, and at another time scornfully flung off. The Cruel Tyrant is now their *Idol*, anon their *abomination*; and they who raised them were often forced to mourn for their *Imprudence* in a *Toleration*; which being at first invented as an *Instrument* for their Design was afterwards the *Engine* of their *Ruine*. This is so fresh an instance, that it is undeniable, that Toleration was in great part, the cause of our former Miseries, and our present Disquiets.

 SECT. II.

That a Toleration is not for the interest of this Nation at this time.

Those who so earnestly press for a *Toleration* of *Dissentions* in *Religion* represent unto us for the *Necessity* of it, the great *Miseries* of the Nation which come by them, and which we acknowledge to be the most necessary Consequences of them. But it is also as evident, that a *Toleration* will not be a *Remedy* for them, because that hath been the very cause which hath hatch'd them to this *Number* and *Strength*. Whoever heard of the Names of *Seekers* and *Quakers* before the general *Licence* was granted for every one to be as mad in *Religion* as he pleased. *Independents* were not vulgarly known, and their Name was as *Obscure* to the world, as the nature of that Sect was to the *Authors* themselves in their beginning; till such time as they

they were summoned from *America* and *Holland* to confront *Presbytery*. *Presbytery* it self was but in Project, and Design managed by a few private persons in the dark, *Ministers* of little note. But when men were free to break their Oaths, to renounce their *Subscriptions*, and cancel all the Bonds of Faith; then those who had *informed, Preached*, and contended for the established *Worship*, appeared with the highest zeal for that which before they dared not to own: and hoped to get that by the ruins of *Episcopacy*, which they despaired to acquire while it was standing. If then a Toleration did open all the avenues to our Miseries, how can we hope it will be a Way to our Happiness? And how can that be for the Interest of *England*, to which it owes all her past Troubles, and present Disorders?

It is for the Interest of *England* as much as for any other State, to have no *Factions*, nor to permit any thing that may either form or nourish them. But the *Dissentions* among us are now but as so many several *Factions* in the State, which I do not remember can be said, of any of the *antient Schisms* and *Heresies* in the Church. Some of them might be against the *Persons* of the *Princes* who did not favour them: but I have read of none that endeavoured the *Change* and *Alteration* of the Government of the Empire. But it is so with us, The *Papists* are for the *Supremacy* of the Bishop of *Rome*. Some of the other *Sects* are for a *Commonwealth*, and think *Monarchy* in the State inconsistent with the *Parity* that is to be in the Church. Others are for the *Pisih-Monarchy*, and think their own *Graces* a title to *Dominion*, under him whom they look for to come, and until he doth come. In all of them there be very many of broken *Hopes* that have fallen from those *Fortunes*, and *Power* which they were *Masters* of in our Troubles, when they had either some great or little Office in their *Cities, Shires, or Parishes*. And now having lost them, and restrain'd in the *Tyranny* they then acted: think that at present the safest way is to smother their *Discontents* under some *dissatisfaction* in Religion, and that to retrieve their lost *Hopes* they must get a Toleration. For when their *Sects* are allowed, their eminency in their parties will give them advantages to drive on their designs in the

State, and make them *Considerable* either to bring about, or obstruct a change. Therefore *Faction* in the State being thus interwoven with *Dissentions* in Religion, the Toleration of one sort is the permission of another. And we may justly fear that they will use their Opportunities (if they get any) to our greater *Confusion*. They being now enraged by their former *Disappointments*: they have also seen their *miscarriages*, and are thereby instructed to a greater *Cunning* to avoid the rocks they before split upon. It will now be done with *greater ease*: the Waves are not yet quite down since our last *Tempest*; and therefore the lesser Winde will soon move them: We have not had time enough to recover our last sickness, and we may easily Relapse to our former Disease. Most of the *same men* are alive still, who were the Causes of our Unhappiness; they have the *same Confidences* among their Parties, know all their *Tempers* and *Humors*, and the Arts and Means of calling them together. Therefore to permit these *Factions*, which is all one with a *Toleration*, cannot be for the *Interest of England*, if *Peace* and *Quietness*, and the steady Administration of the *Laws* be for the Interest of it.

It is also for the Interest of *England* that we have a *Rightful Prince* to rule over us. Whose Just Title giving him a right to all the Affections, and Obedience of the People, he shall need no Arts of Tyrants to keep them in *Fear*, and to weaken them to a *Vassalage*. But *Usurpers*, conscious of their want of Right, know that they have not those affections which are due to it, do therefore endeavour to have the fears of such as cannot love them, and to that end do all to weaken them: which nothing doth so effectually as *Schisms* and *Factions*. From the Courts of Tyrants crept those monstrous Idolatries of *Dogs*, and *Crocodiles*; and he was no other who taught *Israel* to Sin in *Worshiping Calves*. By the same way that these men use their power, do they also get it. And *Dissentions* in Religion do facilitate the way to *Usurpation*. Therefore the *Commons* in the *Parliament*, *Jan. 19.* give this as a reason, why the *Sect of Papists* should not be connived at, because *It openeth too wide a gap for Popularity to any who shall draw too great a party.* And it is not out of our memory, that *Cromwel* got his Power by the other sort of *Sectaries*.
There-

Therefore a Toleration is as much against the Interest of *England* as a rightful King is for it.

To keep the people of *England* in their good Nature, not to have them corrupted in their Manners, is certainly for the *Interest of the Nation*. This people are free, and Open-hearted, naturally full of *Simplicity*, devout and inclinable to Religion: and therefore very obnoxious to Deceivers, that come under the shew of Piety. What cruelty would it be to expose such a people to the Arts of *Impostors*? to suffer them to be scattered as sheep upon the Mountains, without a shepherd? to be corrupted in their Natures, to become *Barbarous, Perverse, Jealous, Cruel, Fierce, and Proud*? for into such *Monsters*, doth *Schisms* and *Factions* transform men; and where they finde not an ill nature, they assuredly make it. And therefore it is contrary to the Interest of *England* to permit that which makes her people to be such.

SECT. 12.

An Answer to the Discourse of the Religion in England, That the Reasons upon which a Toleration is denied to the Papists, will conclude against the other Sectaries.

HAVING seen how *ineffectual* a Toleration is to the removal of our unhappiness, and shewed how *little* it is for the Interest of this Nation at this time: to adjust this *Discourse*, it is fit to consider the reasons which are brought for it.

Those which require our notice, are contained in a *Discourse of the Religion in England*; the Author of which pretends to more Sobriety, than is usual in the Writers for that way, and indeed he seems to be a man of such Parts, as deserved a better subject than that he hath undertaken. In the examination of his Arguments, I shall proceed as becomes him who professes no love to Dissentions: and therefore shall pass over all those things in that tract, which do not immediately concern a Toleration of those Dissentions and Dissenters which it pleads for, and leave the *Papists* to answer for themselves, the reasons upon which a Toleration is denied unto them, viz. 1. That

Popery disposeth Subjects to Rebellion. 2. It persecutes all other Religions within its reach. 3. Wheresoever it findes encouragement it is restless, till it bears down all before it, or hath put all in Disorder. But yet I must minde both the Author and Reader, that the *Practises* upon which these *Reasons* are grounded, are not peculiar to the *Papists*, but are common to all other Sects, as appears in the *Arrians*, *Donatists*, and other *Hereticks*. And if the *Papists* have any *Doctrines* which countenance these practices, they are to be accounted as the issues of their *Insolency* in their own *Greatness*. Every Sect when it is in its beginnings, is lowly, and meek; but having gotten strength so far as to lay down Fear, they then boldly take Counsel from their Fortune, and dictate against their contemned Inferiours, and professed Dissenters. 2dly. The Author ought to have made it appear, that the *Parties* which are pleaded for, are exempt from the guilt of that which is here charged upon the *Papists*.

For, 1. Is not the *Disposing Subjects to Rebellion*, in a great measure effected by that *Position*, That it is lawful to take *Arms* against the King, and that *Arms* may be taken by his Authority against his Person, and against those that are Commissioned by him? Were not these the *Positions* and *Doctrines* that were to solve the scruples of men in the last War? and were not these improved to the Murder of a just Prince? Those that managed that War were all Dissenters from the Religion established by Law; and there cannot (as is conceived) one man be named among them, that was of the Church of England.

For the 2. *The persecuting of all other Religions within its reach.* Did not those who took the Covenant binde themselves to it by Oath? viz. to extirpate Popery, and Prelacy, and Superstition, Heresie, Schisme, and whatsoever they should finde contrary to sound Doctrine. And whither this Extirpation was not a Persecution, let all Ages judge when they shall read the History of the late times, and there finde the Plunderings of *Papists*: the Sequesterings, Plunderings, and Imprisoiments in the nastiest Prisons, and in holds of Ships, of those Ministers and Fellows of Colledges, that were the Asserters of *Liberty*, and the Government legally established in the Church of England.

Solemn League
and Cov. Art. 2.

As for the 3d. *A restlessness where it finds encouragement, till it bears down all before it, or hath put all in disorder.* The late practices have plainly declared, that this is not peculiar to the Papists. For we have seen a Party, that from the time of Queen Elizabeth, through all discouragements, and in despite of the Authority of Princes have still been restless; till they met with those that thought them necessary for other Designs: and being then encouraged, they so far laboured to bear all down before them, that at last they put all in disorder, and were themselves upon the brink of Destruction, together with a confused Nation.

If therefore these be sufficient reasons to deny a Toleration to one Sect, it will seem unequal if it should be granted to others that are no more innocent of the same Crimes. So that this Author hath laid down grounds, upon which Toleration is to be denied as well to the other *Sectaries*, whom he pleads for, as to the *Papist*.

The VIII, IX, and X. Sections of that *Discourse* is to shew that the Reformed Religion makes good Christians, and good Subjects; and it is the permanent Interest of this Kingdom, that it ought to be settled in its full extent: All which needs no Dispute, if it be understood of *The English Reformation, established by Law*, which I conceive that Author intended; but if it be meant of any Reformation, of that Reformation, he will finde it a difficulty to make others believe him: but I will give him the most Charitable construction, and so proceed to the rest.

S E C T. 13.

That there is no Necessity of a Toleration, nor any Intent to extirpate Dissenters, but only Dissentions.

IN Sect. XI. He brings his Arguments for the Necessity of Toleration, which only can give a colour to it; for Toleration is by the Confession of all, one of those things that are not good in their own Nature. The thing he asserts is, *That the Dissenters from the present Ecclesiastical Polity, are (as he phraseth it) Momentous in the ballance of this Nation.* This he proves, 1. By their Number, *They are (saith he) every where*

Preface to
Eccel. Polit.

spread through City, and Countrey, they make no small part of all ranks, and sorts of men, &c. The use of this Argument (you must observe) 1. Hath been one of the ancient Arts of all Dissenters. In the Conference at Carthage the *Donatists* would needs have the names of all the *Bishops* of their Party read, before they would admit any Conference. To this very end that they might by their number daunt the Judge of the Cause, and their Opposites. In Queen *Elizabeths* time, when the Dissenters were but in their beginnings; yet Mr. *Hooker* tells us, that they published the *Musters* they had made of their Party, and proclaimed them to amount to I know not how many thousands. To the same purpose is the Number boasted of at this time. But 2dly. It is less terrible now then ever it was. For, though the Multitude of Dissenters be great, yet their Divisions are no less, which weaken them as to any undertaking; *Jealousies*, and divided *Interests*, which are the issues of Dissentions in Opinions, breed confusions in the Counsels of a Multitude, and distract their Force: and therefore this Argument hath the less strength to terrifie the Governors, as was intended, or to enforce a Necessity of Toleration.

The next argument is, that the dissenting Ministers, notwithstanding all Reproaches, Provocations, and Wishes, do appeal to God, that they dare not conform for Conscience sake: and whatsoever their grounds of Dissent are, they still hold out, &c. The force of this argument is, (as I take it) that there is a necessity of a Toleration, because the Dissenting Ministers will not conform. But if this be a motive strong enough now, it might have been then, when the Covenant was pressed, when so many thousand Ministers, and both Universities in effect declared, they did not dare for Conscience sake to take it, and held it out all the time of Tyranny; and yet there was then no thoughts of a Comprehensive Ordinance, no Toleration, nor Connivance (unless it were of some very few, whom their Relations covered from the fury of the Imposers.) Besides, the Number of the Non-Conformists, compared with those that do now conform, and of those that under the Usurpers suffered for Conformity to the Laws, are so inconsiderable, that the Testimonies of a few ought not to come in ballance with the multitude on the other side. More-

over

over though it should be granted that their Dissents are from *Conscience*, either *Scrupulous*, *Dubious*, or *Erroneous*; yet we cannot say their *holding out* is upon that account: not as that Author saith, *against hopes of Indulgence*, but upon hopes of it. For it is sufficiently known, that about that time the *Act of Uniformity* was to be put in practise, there was then spread abroad through the whole Nation, a report, that *the King and Council would give an Indulgence*; that *their friends at London had petitioned for it*, and that the *safer way to obtain what they aimed at, was to hold out from Conforming*: When as indeed there was nothing petition'd for, but only an Indulgence for some few Ministers in *London*, who pretended to have been very industrious for the Kings Return, without any consideration of their Party in the Nation. Yet this had the effect of truth for a time: for it made many Ministers that were inclined to Conformity, to neglect the Season when they should have done it. And by this means were the greatest part of them trappan'd into *Non-conformity*: For having lost their Livings, and having so publicly declared against the Law, the *Shame of being too changeable*; and the *Unprofitableness* of returning made most of them hold out. Though we can name some after they had given examples to others of slighting that Act, did immediately by their Patrons favour in a new Presentation, gain an institution, by subscribing to what before they declared against. and no year is without examples of some coming in to Conformity, when they have opportunities of getting a Benefice by it. While the others are almost every year abused to an Obstinacy by renewed hopes of Indulgence.

The third Argument is, because the *several Laws for Uniformity for regulating Corporations, against Conventicles, for the removal of Non-Conforming Ministers from Burroughs, &c.* have not advanced the esteem, acceptance, of the Ecclesiastical State, and the acquiescence of the people in it. To this it is answered. That these *Laws* have not their intended effect, is not because the King, and the Parliament were mistaken in their Counsels: but in that those who were entrusted with the Execution have been unfaithful in their Offices. For it is too apparent how these *Laws* have not been executed to the ends for which

which they were made. They have been sometimes interpreted contrary, and beside the mindes of the Law-givers, and the intent of the Law. Many sober Justices of the Peace having done what their Oaths, and the Law required of them, have been discouraged in their Duties, having all their Acts reversed by others. And when the *Laws are not executed*, it is much worse than if they had never been made. For they do more encourage the *Wicked*, impunity hardens in sin, and men sport with Laws that have no hand to manage them, as with painted Thunderbolts. The *Righteous* and *Just* are *Ensnared* by a Law that is not Executed, for doing what that requires; and yet not finding protection by it, they are obnoxious to the malice, and hatred of them against whom the Law is made. Nay the *Law-givers* fall into *Contempt*, the *King* and *Parliament* who should have the Reverence of the People, reap nothing but scorn by their Laws which are not Executed. For how apt are some to think, that either they have no *Judgement* in making such Laws, which they care not how they are observed: or to be very *Changeable* and various, apt to dislike that to morrow which is this days Sanction: or that they have no *Love* to the Goodness which they command others to observe: or that they want a *Power* to enforce what they enjoy? Which soever of these it is, upon which the not executing of the Laws is imagined to follow, it exposes the *Law-givers* and those that are for *them* to *Contempt*: and they who are contemptible cannot be safe. Now this being our *Case*, that though Laws have been made for our Settlement, yet they have not been executed, it is no wonder that there is so little advancement towards it: but on the other side it is so strange that we are not in a much worse condition. So that there can be no pretence for a *Toleration*, because these Laws have done no good, since they were not vigorously executed to that end.

In *Self. XII.* he labours to shew, that *The Extirpation of the Dissenters is both Difficult and Unprofitable*. This might have been wholly spared, but that it is an *Artifice* of the *Discourse* to raise *Fears* in the Dissenters, that they shall be proceeded against in some violent way of Terror, and to raise

Fea-

Jealousies of the King and Parliament, as if they meditated *Blood and Cruelty*. Nothing of this nature can ever be charged upon the Church of *England*, though provoked, and incited by the cruelties on both sides: those of the *Papists*, and those of the *Sectaries*, which were used to extirpate all her Assertors. All that is endeavour'd is to extirpate *Dissensions* and not *Dissenters*. For (1.) *No man's Conscience is imposed upon*: but notwithstanding the late Acts, he may enjoy his Opinion in his own house, and with his friends, if their number exceed not four. (2.) No man either *Lay or Clergy* hath any *Subscription* enjoyned him as a condition of *Communion* with us. Only it is required of those who are to be entrusted with the *Ministry* in the Church. That they disavow all *Obligations and Opinions to break the Peace* of the Nation: and that they *assent to the Use of those things* which are for the *Unity of Christians* in this Kingdom among themselves. Which is no more then what the *Law of Nature* hath granted to every *Society*, which the Church hath in all Ages practis'd, and which our *Adversaries* themselves did use; for the *Presbyterians* required a subscribing their *Solemn League*, and the *Independents* had their *Church-Covenant*. No liberty is denyed, but that of divulging *Scruples, Doubts, and Error*, to the offence of the weak: they may have *their persuasions to themselves before God*. Nor is the penalty so severe after the third *Conviction*, as that which is inflicted on *Remissive Priests* at their first deprehension: which yet these men account just, and clamoured against the late King, as a Favourer of *Papery*, if it were not executed upon every one of them when they were taken. By which it is evident, that there is no intent to extirpate the *Dissenters*, but the *Dissensions*: which is not Difficult, nor can be unprofitable. Therefore I shall not trouble the Reader with that Author's imaginary fears of Cruelty upon the *Dissenters*, since there is no necessity for the use of it, nor any grounds for such apprehensions. And this the Discourser himself was conscious of: for he brings it in with a *Peradventure, some think their total Extirpation to be the surest way*: and then disputes against Cruelty, and rants with a threatening of beggary in Trading, in case they should so be dealt with.

Was this done as becomes a moderate spirit, and one fit for a Comprehension? It is too apparent that there is much of a malicious Artifice in this Section. For besides, what hath been already shewed, he is not content to call his own Party *an intelligent, sober, peaceable sort of men, the Residences of the no small part of the Nations Sobriety, Frugality and Industry*, which is the guise of Schismaticks so to praise their own Party to the dishonour of others. But he most maliciously implies that the Characters of the Prelatical are *Drinking and Swearing*; For he saith, *many will swear and be drunk, to declare they are none of them, i. e. of the Presbyterians and other Dissenters*. Thus he hath publickly Printed what the other Ministers of the Faction do privately perswade the People: that there are no *Ministers*, or others of the Church of England but debauched persons, and men of no tolerable converse. To which slanderous accusation we will only say, *The Lord rebuke them.*

The next peice of malice is that he implies (which also is a reproach of the Government) *The languishing of Trade, the fall of Rents, the scarcity of Money, the Necessities and Difficulties of private Estates; the general Complaining, are from the not right stating and pursuing the Nations Interest*, which is as he Imagines, *Comprehension and Toleration*. As if a great Plague raging for one year in an heavier manner then ever before was known in the City, the great Mart of all our Trading: and another year in many of the Trading Ports & Cities of the Nation. A War for 3 years maintained against the most powerful Trading Nations in Europe, and so consequently in the World. The great destruction of an inestimable Treasure by the fire of London. Besides the *Arts* which *Phanaticks & Common-wealthsmen* use to make our necessities greivous, and our complaints more clamorous. As if (I say) all these were no way *effeetual* to our present *Wants and Decays*; but the People are still taught to cry the *Bishops*, and the *Clergie*, are the great *Causes* of our present miseries. This is like that malice the Devil raised against the Primitive Christians, when by his Priests he instructed the common rabble of the *Gentiles*, that when there was any Publick Calamity, if *Tiber* flowed too much, or *Nile* too little, then to cry out *Christianos ad Leonem, i. e. the* Chri-

Christians must be cast to the Lions. So now the Bishops must down, and Sacrilege must repair what our Sins and Vanities have wasted.

Another peice of malice is in the Argument which he makes for his Adversaries to justify the r supposed cruelty; *But this sort of men (saith he) are Inquisitive, and therefore troublesome to Rulers*; and thus having harnessed his Enemy, he attaches him. As if the Church of England did Envy her Children knowledge, and that her Dominion was to be founded upon their Blindness. All the Practices and Doctrine of the Church of England declare that she hath the same with as *Moses*: *I Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.* For she fears no disturbance from those who are *Wise*, and have their senses exercised to discern Good and Evil: all her troubles arise from the *Ignorant and Half-witted*. Since she proposes the *Scriptures* to every Reader, She cannot be judged to be averse from those that search it, and that are inquisitive to approve things that are excellent. But indeed she does, as the Apostle, *abhor those that are ever learning, and yet never come to the Knowledge of the Truth.*

In Sect. XIII. he would perswade us that what he had said is no Threatning to Rulers, nor Intimation to Rebellion; for he saith, *Why may not Governors be minded by Subjects of the State of their People; as it is indeent; without any hint or thought of Rebellion?* It is true, they may, if so be they mind the Governors themselves, and with that Submission as is due to Magistrates: if the Subjects are not Partisans, and so mind their own Interest to the Injury of the Publick: if they be such as may be presumed to have a clear Understanding of the Nature of the People, their Grievances, and of proper Remedies. But miserable must the condition of Governors be, if every private person who will have the impudence to abuse their time and patience, must be of their Council. If they must bear with the Remonstrances of every Factionous Party, and must admit those Rules, and Arguments, of Equity, and Safety which they have modelled for their own advantage. If this be admitted, the Thrones of Princes are level'd with the dust, and Parliaments shall have but a precarious Authority,

ty, and no more then what these *Demagogues* will give them. For this was plainly the practice of the late Times; by which we were reduced to *Anarchy*, and then bow'd down our necks to the yoke of Tyranny.

And now, Let those who (as he will have it) are not transported with Passion judge, what it is, to tell the Discontented Party themselves (as well as others) in Print: That they are an *Intelligent, Sober sort of men*, the Residences of no small part of the Nation's frugality and Industry; that with them Trading, Civility, and Good Conversation do cohabit, and remove; That they are momentous in the ballance of the Nation, Numerous and every where spread. That their Ministers are Examples to them of Constancy, and Resolution. That hitherto they have been successful against the Laws. That if any meditate their total Extirpation, asperchance some do: yet they cannot do it without hazard of the Publick ruin, or the loss of Trade and Wealth. That the not gratifying of them hath brought a Decay already. And that their Cause is good: for it is for their Inquiries into Religion. Let them judge I say, whether to tell this to the People, so, that the Supreme Governor (it is probable) may have no notice of it but in a Mutiny, nor ever see these Rules of Safety and Equity, till they be presented on the Swords of a Popular Revolt: whether this is to mind Governors of the State of the People, or to prepare the People to mind their own State?

But he saith, Should they whom he pleads for meditate Rebellion and War, they were abandoned of their own Reason. We say so to. Nevertheless it is no such impossible thing, but that a People may easily be præcipated into ways of violence, by such Popular Discourses as these are; for the last War had not more specious pretences nor higher encouragements then are here represented.

And indeed they need not War, for the Author doth insinuate another way more plausible, and less hazardous: and yet as effective; for he saith, There be sullen Mutinies that make no noise, but may loosen all the Joynts and Ligaments of Policy. But it will be an hard matter to justify such a Mutiny from the guilt of Rebellion: For that doth not consist only in taking up Arms, but in a wilful refusal of Obedience, which

is the meaning of such *sullen Mutinies*. And it is as contrary to the Commands of Christ, as taking the Sword. For he commands *Obedience for Conscience sake*: and not only when the Magistrate is to be feared. So that the Author while he endeavours to *divert* the Imputation of one Sort of Rebellion, doth yet *threaten* another.

SECT. 14.

That to Moderate the Establish'd Order is neither Prudent nor Safe, nor for the Peace of the Church.

IN SECT. XIV. the Author proposes three Expedients to comprehend all Dissenters and saith, *That the Settling of a Nation may be made up of an Establishment, a Limited Toleration, a Discreet Connivence*. He is not so true to his own Discourse, and his Reputation of a Judicious person as to tell us what he means by every one of these, and how they shall be composed; yet he is most kind to the Establishment, as that which concerns himself and his own party, and though he do not tell us what it is in particular, or shall be; yet in

In SECT. XV. he tells us in General, *That the Established Order should be so broad, that by its own force it may be chief, and controule all Parties. That it be compact to promote Sound Doctrine and godly Life: and to keep out all wicked Error and praelise. And therefore must not have narrower bounds, then things necessary to Christian Faith, and Life, and godly Order in the Church.* But we say this Establishment is not enough for a Settlement, because it doth not secure the Peace; and how can we settle but in that? To this the Author questioneth, *Why should not the great things of Christianity in the hands of Wise Builders, be a sufficient Foundation of Church-Unity and Concord?* We answer (1) that they are not: For it is plain the Church of England and the Presbyterians are agreed in the great things of Christianity, and yet there is no Concord betwixt them. (2) They alone cannot be, Because there may, and does arise Dissentions about the *Persons*, to whose care these great things

things shall be entrusted to see them conveyed to Posterity : whether they shall be *Single Persons*, or a *Consistory*, or each *single Congregation*. And men also may differ concerning the *Means* of Conveying these things ; the *Worship* of God, and the *Circumstances* of it, as we see they do. Therefore to preserve Peace among her Members ; (who if they *Dissent* cannot be brought to Unity, but by the Determinations and Injunctions of their Lawful Superiour) the Church hath need to determine more then the great things of Christianity : and to enjoyn more then what is barely necessary to Faith and *Order*. We say as well as he, that *Moderation* and *Charity* are far more excellent than glorying in *Opinions*, *Formalities*, &c. but we say also that *Charity* cannot be where there is not Peace.

The next argument is, That *some parts* of enjoyed Uniformity are but *Indifferent*, and have been long Disputed from Bishop Hooper's time to the present *Non-Conformist*, and, if this be concluding, they ought therefore not to be enjoyed. To which we answer 1. that they being *Indifferent*, i. e. neither *Commanded*, nor forbidden by God, are therefore the proper matter for the *Injunctions* of the *Magistrate*. Since we are Obligated to the things *Commanded* by God, although the Magistrate do not Command, yea though he doth *Contradict* : and what God hath forbidden we are bound not to do, though the *Magistrate* leave us to *Our selves*, or *Command* the contrary ; and therefore a thing *Indifferent* is the most proper subject of the power of man, therefore because it is so, it cannot be concluded, that it ought not to be enjoyn'd.

2. If things long *Disputed*, and *Doubted* may not be enjoyned, then let them tell us what may ; for there is scarce any *Truth* which hath not had its *Heresie* contrary to it : and therefore the Church may not enjoyn things necessary to *Faith* and *Order* : which this Author in few lines before granted to her. Besides, Would not this Argument be as well urged by the *Papists* ; for their Cause hath been disputed even from the beginning of *Luther's* Reformation by several men of great Parts and Abilities, that wanted not *Pretensions* to the Titles of *Learned*, and *Conscientious*. So also may the *Soci-nians* urge that the Points we hold against them have been

Disputed

Disputed almost from the beginning of the Reformation. But yet the Author contends, 'tis not fit that *the first* should have a Toleration, and I suppose he will be ashamed to pretend for the *last*.

But then he inquires, *What shall a man do that doubts of the things enjoyed, seeing the Apostle saith, He that doubts, is damned if he eats because he eateth not of Faith.* To Doubt (we answer) doth suppose Arguments on both sides, and in such case the Common Rule is, *the safest part is to be followed.* Now let all sober men judge, whether it is not safer to keep the *Peace and Unity* of the Church, which is so frequently, and with so much Authority Commanded by Christ: to be Obedient to the Higher Powers in those things which are proper matter for their Commands, and wherein God himself hath determined nothing: to Obey them that *are over us in the Lord*, (all which are clear and plain Duties :) then for a scruple or doubt of the Use of a thing that God hath left to humane Liberty (which the Magistrate hath power to confine) to cause Schisms in the Church; Factions in the State, Despise the Laws of Princes, and the Government of the Church? As for the Text of the Apostle, *He that doubts is, &c.* It is an admonition given to the Jews that were become Christians, that they should not do that in which the Church had not interposed her Authority, by the Example of others, which they themselves thought not lawful, or did very much doubt whether it were so or no; for he that did go against his own perswasion, did condemn himself in that which his practice did seem to allow. Therefore that Text doth not concern this Case at all.

The 2d. attempt is, *That the Church not claiming an Infallibility, cannot settle the Conscience by her sole Warrant, but still leaves room for doubting: and in prescribed Forms and Rites the Conscience that doth its office, will interpose, and concern it self, &c.*

I am willing to hope, that the Discourser writ this in Ignorance, and that he is not guilty of such portentous Malice: that so he might destroy the Authority of the Church, he did not fear to publish such an Opinion as would disturb all Government, both in Families, and in the State: that would confound

confound all *Society*, and extirpate *Faith* and *Justices* from among the sons of *men*. For if, whosoever disclaims *Infallibility* cannot settle, *i. e.* oblige (for if it doth not signifie that, it signifies nothing) the Conscience: Then neither the *Laws* of *Kings*, nor the *Commands* of *Fathers*, and *Masters* (who disclaim *Infallibility*) are to be obeyed for *Conscience sake*, or in the *Lord*: but only as the power of the Superiour is able to enforce Obedience, or Punishment. No man likewise is obliged in *Conscience* to perform his *Vows*, *Promises*, and *Contracts*: because when he made them he was not *Infallible*, and being not so, he cannot settle his own *Conscience*, but leaves room for doubting; and if he doubts (as he applies the Apostles Text) he is damned, if he does perform; and therefore it will not be safe to perform them. Thus this *Mine* that is wrought to blow up the *Churches Authority*, will bury all *Government*, and *Common Honesty* in the ruins of it.

Such are the goodly Doctrines, whereby these men keep their Party close unto them, and make them boggle at whatsoever the Magistrate requires from them, as terrors to their Conscience. If the Author thinks he hath secured himself from the shame of the *absurd Consequences* of this Opinion, by that clause, *Her sole Warrant*, he is unjust, and unfaithfully represents her Doctrine; as if she pretended to binde the Conscience by her own Authority, which is very false. For when We hold, *That humane Laws of things not unlawful, do oblige the Consciences of men subject to the Law-givers*. We do not refer the *Obligation*, which is a necessity of Obedience, to the *matter* of those *Laws*, for that being in its nature *Indifferent*, cannot be *Necessary*: But to those commands of *God*, which enjoyns us to be *subject to the higher powers*. To obey them that are over us in the *Lord*. For those commands do of themselves, and directly enforce a Necessity of Obedience to whatsoever humane Laws are not in themselves unlawful, upon the penalty of *God's displeasure*. For the Truth of which, as it is easie to prove, (were it not to render the Discourse too long by interweaving *Incidental Controversies*) so do we appeal to the Judgment of all sober Divines whatsoever. We have for it the Testimony of Mr. *Calvin* the Founder of

of the Presbyterian Government, and the Greatest Ornament that ever they had; who though he disputes against Humane Constitutions, yet meeting with the Objection raised from that Text: *We must be subject not only for Wrath but also for Conscience sake.* Answers by Distinguishing betwixt the Genus and Species; For (saith he) although the particular Laws in themselves, do not touch the Conscience, yet are we Obliged by that General Command of God which commends unto us the Authority of Magistrates, which is as much as we desire, for if the Authority of Magistrates do either Directly, or Indirectly; in General or Particular; by it self, or by vertue of Gods Command; bind the Conscience, then must it needs be false which this Author saith, that *In prescribed Forms and Rites of Religion, the Conscience that doth its office will interpose and concern it self, &c.* For that Conscience which is guided by the fear of God, will know its Office is to submit for God's Commands sake, to what those that are over us in the Lord do carefully prescribe.

In the next place he brings in the Testimony of *Woful Experience*, trying out, *No more of such Injunctions than needs must.* It is true indeed, *We have had Woful Experience* of men, who to free themselves of such Injunctions; have put the Nation into Confusion: and those who scrupled at a Surplice, made no Difficulty to roll many Thousand Garments in Blood. And yet the *Injunctions* of our Church were no more than needs must. For at the beginning of the Reformation there were two sorts of men; One that thought it a great matter of Conscience to depart from a piece of the least Ceremony, they were so addicted to their old Customs. Another sort were so new fangled, that they would Innovate all things, and nothing could satisfy them, but what was new. Whether was it not Necessary for the Church to interpose for Peace sake, and by her Determination to put an end to those Controversies? If it was necessary that she should interpose, she must either sling off one of the Parties, or make a Determination that might satisfy both sides, if Moderation would prevail: To have flung off that Party that were for Ceremonies, had been imprudent, being the greatest Number comprehending all those who staid at home, and did not fly in the time of Queen

Reasons of the
Ceremonies
before the
Common-
Prayer-Book.

Mary's Persecution; which did facilitate the return of *Protestancy* at *Queen Elizabeth's* Reception to the Crown: It had been also the more *dangerous*, for it would have made them more obnoxious to the temptations of *Romish* Priests, who would have soon took the Advantage of so numerous a Discontented Party, and wrought their Dissatisfaction to a relapse to Popery. That Party which were *against Ceremonies*, though they were but *small*, as being but some few of those that fled beyond Sea, (for all were not so vain to like those things they saw abroad, because they had no such at home) though they had likewise brought a *Dishonour* to the Reformation, and an Infamy upon our Nation, by their unquietts and troubles they caused at *Frankfort*: yet it had been great *pity* to have cast them off, since they had suffered for Religion, and gave evidence that they had a zeal for Piety, though in some things not according to *knowledge*. Besides, it would not have been of good report in the *Churches* abroad, among whom these men had conversed, and with whom it was expedient for Ours to hold a good *Correspondence*, and *Brotherly Communion*, although she was no more obliged to receive all their practices, than they to receive hers. Nor was it safe in their first beginnings to have rejected or despised any number of men, when the Common Enemy was Numerous and Industrious. Thus it being neither *Prudent* nor *Safe* to reject either Party, it was *necessary* for the Church to consult her own Peace betwixt them. But this *was not possible* for her to do, without pleasing each Party, to their *Edification* in some things: Which being Indifferent were therefore in her Power either to Confirm or Condemn; and also *enjoyning* some things to the Common Observance of all. The Church therefore did take away the *excessive* Multitude of Ceremonies, as those which were *dark*, that had been abused by the *superstitious* blindness of the Unlearned; and such as did administer to the Covetousness of others. This might have satisfied the Innovators if reason could or if they, had had any desires of Peace, any compassion for their Opposites that were subject to the same Infirmities with themselves, though under different forms. On the other side, the Church retained those

those few that were for *Decency, Discipline*, and apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God. And this did satisfie those which were against too great, and many *Innovations*. Now let any man judge whether the Church's Injunctions at first were not necessary? The same *Necessity* for them continues still. Because those that are for the Church are as unwilling to have these Ceremonies taken away, as her Enemies are for the removal both of them and her; And are these to be revoked by a compliance with those that will never be satisfied? Shall the Church abandon those who in Conscience adhered to her in the severest Persecution, to gratifie those who pretended Conscience to destroy her? Besides the imputations that have laid upon the things enjoyed, as *Antichristian, Idolatrous, Superstitions*, &c. the War that was undertook to remove them; makes the Church think it her behoof to keep them, lest Concessions in that kinde, may be urged by her Adversaries for a confession of those crimes, and taken as a colour to charge her with all the Blood that has been spilt in that quarrel: For so these very men served the late *Murdered King*. Moreover, what a reproach is it for a Church, whose Foundation is upon a Truth, to be various. And what advantage do the Popish Priests make of our very Temptations to Inconstancy, which makes all that have Authority contemptible; and Changes are full of danger. So that the Injunctions are become as necessary as *Prudence, Safety*, and *Honour* can make them. It was the *importunity* of Hereticks that made the *Primitive Church* determine many things in their seasons, which before were not matter of observation; and take up some expressions which were not vulgarly known in the Church before. So likewise Dissentions about things indifferent have necessitated the Church to Injunctions; for as other *Laws* arise from *Corruptions* in manners, so *Schisms* in Religion do beget *Injunctions*. We wish as well as you that Injunctions were fewer, *i. e.* we wish you had never given occasion for them.

But that we may know what is necessary, he tells us, *That the Indisputable Truths of Faith, and the Indispensable duties of Life, are the main object of Church Discipline.* Yet he leaves us

still in the dark ; for what are those *Indisputable Truths* ? since there is scarce any Truth of Faith that hath not been disputed against ; if these be the main of her charge, she hath a narrow Province ; and *Papists*, and *Socinians*, and every Heretick may promise themselves exemptions from her care. And as for *Indispensable Duties*, is there any one duty more Indispensable, that is more strictly enjoyned then the Unity, and the Peace of the Church ? and yet all this dispute is to deprive her of the means that were proper for it : and because she will still take care of it, she cannot avoid the slander in the last words of that Paragraph.

In the next place, he would have the *Moderation* which the Church of England uses in her *Articles of Predestination*, &c. to be likewise used in the present *Orders and Ceremonies*. But the case is not the same. Those points are so full of difficulty, that they, and questions of that nature, have been matter of Dispute in all Ages, and all Religions : therefore our Church did with prudence take notice that there were some common Truths on both sides, which have analogy to the Faith, and are a Foundation for Good Life ; and these she is tenacious of, and leaves the nicer speculations to the curiolity of Disputers. But about her *Orders and Ceremonies*, this is the only thing to be resolved ; Whether the Church hath power to enjoin an indifferent Ceremony ? which sure may be soon disputed, and determined. Besides, the Dissenters are not able to name any one Church besides Ours, from which there was a Schism made for a Ceremony.

His last Argument against Injunctions, is, *Men might more easily agree in the use of these little things, or of some of them, were their Internal Judgments spared, and subscriptions not enjoyned.* Churches and States have never thought it safe to permit the concerns of their Peace to the *Ingenuity* of men, but have secured their Quiet by strict *Laws*, and the *Engagements* of those who were to minister in them. I have shewed above that Toleration of Dissentions (that is, a leaving men to their different opinions) hath not abated, but encreased them. It hath been found necessary that men should declare their *Internal Judgments* to keep off their *Disputes* against things in practice ; for if men were left to this Itch of *Strangling* and do-
ting

ting about Questions, the smallest Doubts and Scruples may be blown up to the most bloody Contentions. It was observed that the Controversies betwixt the Lutherans, and Calvinists were *Europe Spec.*
but a coal, which a wise man with a little moisture of his mouth might *p. 172.*
soon have quenched: but at length the Ministers, with the winds of *Edit. 1637.*
theirs in their Disputings, have so enflamed them, that it threat-
neeth a great ruine and calamity of both sides. So that to take off Injunctions on this score, is neither Prudent nor safe. But alas, there is no Probability, that, if they be not enjoined, they will ever be used: they themselves have given us too full an experience. For all the time from the King's coming home, to the time that the Act of Uniformity was to be put in Practice, there was a suspension of these Injunctions: yet it is sufficiently known that none of the present Non-Conformists did in the least measure agree in the use of any these little things (as he calls them) but Writ, Preached, and Railed against them. And though desired by the King, to read so much of the Liturgy as themselves had no exception against, and so could have no pretension from Conscience. Yet the honour of their Party, and their Credit, was not to be reconciled with such a compliance to the Condescensions of their Sovereign, they thought to bring Him and the Parliament to lower terms, by being high in their own Resolutions. So fresh an experiment cools us as to all the hopes this Author suggests unto us of what they may do. When as neither he, nor they will give any assurance, that they will do so. It is needless therefore to argue with him, what the Church should do in case their own good nature would bring to them Conformity, since it appears but a Chimera of his own Fancy, and it would be but sport to talk of that which neither was, nor is, nor is like to be.

It is as vain and needless to speak to the XVIth. which enquires, *Whether the Dissenters are capable of being brought into such a Comprehension.* For since this Comprehension is to be formed by moderating the established Order; and this Moderation is to be performed by taking away all the Injunctions that the Church and State have made for peace sake; which abrogation cannot be proved to be either safe or Prudent, and would be the Prostitution of the Authority of the King and the Par-

liament,

liament, to the forwardness of men that will not be satisfied, and therefore not fit to be done: to what purpose then will it be to argue, Whether they would receive, what is dangerous to give? Besides, the Dissenters are of several Sects, and every one of them have the same common pretensions. For they all profess they dare *not conform for Conscience sake*: They are angry if you do not believe them to be as Godly, Sober, Civil, as they themselves say they are: They boast of their Number, and that Trading and Commerce will either Languish or Flourish as they are used: and yet for all this, this very Author gives over all other Sects, but only the Presbyterians: for he saith, *Be it supposed that some among them seem not reducible to Publick Order; but another sort there are, whose Principles are fit for Government, i. e. Presbyterians.* Thus all this noise for comprehension is but for one only Sect that hath no other pretensions to the kindeness of the State, but what are common to all, and therefore in equity should be no more considered than the others. *Nay but,* saith the Discourser, *they are of chiefest moment, their Principles are fit for Government, the stability whereof hath been experimented in those Countries, where they have had the concurrence of the Civil Powers.* But yet this cannot satisfie us; for no experiment hath yet ever been in the World, of Presbytery permitted, and encouraged where there was a Protestant Episcopacy, (as this comprehension supposeth.) For where Episcopacy is established by the Antient and Fundamental Laws of a Nation, there Presbytery is no other but a Sect; and being so, will, as (the Author saith of) *Popery*, and as every Sect; and as we have had a late experiment of this very Presbytery, be restless till it bear all down before it, or hath put all into Disorder.

It is also not for the credit of Presbytery, which the Author adds, that *Their way never yet obtained in England, nor were they favoured with the Magistrates vigorous Aid, &c.* For if those that brought it to the light, encouraged it, bound themselves, and all they could either perswade or terrifie, to it by a *Solemn League and Covenant.* If they who for this plundered, Sequestred, and Undid many thousand Families in the Nation, (for the Covenant was to Establish this Presbytery) were yet af-

ter-

terwards Sick of it, and gave it no more, nay, not so much countenance as they did to the other Sects, whom this Author saith, are not reducible to publick Order: it is a strong presumption that they found the principles of *Presbytery* no more fit for Government than the Principles of any other Sects. So that it is to be concluded, that in the Judgment of the first Admirers and Friends of *Presbytery*, it is no more capable of being brought into a Comprehension than any other Sect. For as they made use of it to undermine *Episcopacy*, so they hissed for all other Sects to affront, reproach, and baffle *Presbytery*.

But notwithstanding all this, the Author, though he waves the *Asserting of their Discipline*, yet he makes this inquiry, *Whether the Presbyterians be of a Judgment and Temper that makes them capable of the Magistrates Paternal Care and conduct to such a stated order as will comport with this Church and Kingdom?* This in plain English for the Original is a *Dilect of Canting*, is, whether *Presbytery* is to be established together with *Episcopacy*? or, *Whether Ministers that are of the Presbyterian persuasion, are equally, and together with the Ministers of the Church of England to be admitted to all the Benefits and Offices in it?* In this question we are for the Negative, upon these reasons. 1. Because the Principles of *Presbyterian Perswasion* do not admit any *Stability*, but may be drawn out to patronize the wildest Sects that are, or have been. This was long since observed by Arch-Bishop *Whitgift*, and Learned Mr. *Hooker*, men of great Judgment, and famous in their times; who did foresee, and foretel, that if ever *Puritanism*, (which was the Name in those dayes for *Presbytery*) should prevail among us, it would soon draw *Anabaptism* after it: and since their dayes we have had a clear experience of it, that not only *Anabaptism*, but also *Quakers*, and *Seekers*, grew up out of their principles. And how can we ever hope for settlement, if such an Avenue be opened to every Sect?

Bishop Sander-
son's Preface;
Sect. 23.

2. If men that are perswaded in their Consciences, that our Ceremonies are *Idolatrous*, and *Superstitious*, and as best but trifles, our Liturgy and Government *Popish* and *Antichristian*, be joyned with men far otherwise perswaded in their Consciences; what a vanity is it to think we shall have peace? especially

pecially since by their perswasions the very means of Peace, the Determination and Injunction of a Superiour is also cut off. For this Author said before, *Nothing that hath not infallibility can settle the Conscience.* To think that these Differently perswaded men will content themselves with their own Opinions, is to imagine they will all be *Wise* on both sides; which is not to be dreamt of. For there will be some *Pedantique, Disputative, and Passionate* Divines that will often embroyl both Parties; and we must be continually quarreling to the sport of our Enemies, the reproach of the Gospel, and the disquiet of our Nation.

But yet the Author is for Comprehension, a pattern of which he gives drawn by one suspected for a *Socinian*; but he doth not tell us, that this he will stick to, or any other; but he saith, *This or the like Latitude.* When he is fixed in his measures, we may consider how to answer. That the *Presbyterians* are capable of a Comprehension, he would perswade us by shewing how far they agree with us about the things in Question: All which is nothing to the purpose; for in every *Controversie* there be many things wherein the Dissenters agree: but they are ne're a whit the nearer peace in that wherein they differ. He doth not tell us of any advance towards Unity that they have made in their *Opinions*; and the account he gives us of the debates about Ecclesiastical Affairs, do but still speak our Distance; and therefore we have no reason to conclude, that they are yet in a *Temper capable of a Comprehension.*

Sett. XVII. being designed for an Harangue; *That Acquiescence in the Widened Establishment is the safety of Religion,* can expect no answer, till we know how *Wide* the *Establishment* is. Which this Author hath no where laid down, but only talks loosely, in general that some such thing is necessary, and negatively, that it must be without Injunctions: Which we have shewed can never be an establishment; and therefore I shall not trouble the Reader in arguing at random against an uncertain Notion.

The like uncertainty we are at *Sett. XVIII.* which mentions *Toleration and Connivence,* but tells not what they are, nor their

their bounds, nor to what Sects he assigns them. Being little solicitous, it seem: for this ; having before provided a place of rest for himself, and his Party, in the *Stated Order*, the *Widened Establishment*, and the *Comprehension*. Only to commend a Toleration, he saith, *The World wants not an experiment of the safety of a Toleration*. But we want an instance of the safety of Toleration in any Nation whatsoever, where the Supreme Governor had not a **Standing Army**, to Circumscribe, and Confine the heats of Dissenters in Religion to their own breasts, and keep off the destructive effects of Schism. So that the *Experiments the world hath had*, reach not home to our Case. For his *Majesty* graciously declines all such Power as may give any suspicion of Terror to the Nation.

In Sect. XIX. He *advises Dissenters of Narrow and Rigid Principles to Moderation* : a good undertaking, and therefore not to be contradicted by any Party ; for all may, and do, make use of the same counsel to their Opposers. But if the Author had exemplified it in himself, he needed not to have troubled himself, or the World, in Writing this Discourse. For that is the surest way to an Establishment, *If every Christian would be deeply sensible of the Common Interest of Reformed Christianity, which is incomparably more valuable than those private Opinions, which may have much of his Fancy and Affection : And in despite of Dissatisfaction, acquiesce in his Private Security and Freedom, and not reach after that Liberty that may unsettle the publick Order, and undermine the Common Safety.*

His last attempt is to reconcile this *Comprehensive Way* to three Important Interests, and first to that of the **King**, Sect. XX. In which I cannot finde one Argument to prove that this *Comprehensive Way* is for the Interest of the **King**. And indeed it cannot : for the grand Interest of the **King**, as of all other Princes, is the *mutual Confidence betwixt Him and His People*, which can never be attained in establishing Dissentions among the People : for in that State he shall then be alwayes incumbered with the Jealousies of some one Part or other ; and then all the Blessings they have enjoyed by his Government shall be turned to ruine him, when their Advantages do encourage. Witness the *Late King*, against whom was used the Wealth,

and Plenty with which His and his Predecessors Reigns had blessed the Nation ; and therefore it follows that the greatest Interest of the King is to have no Dissentions , that so he may have the most assured Confidence of the People.

But the Author minds not Arguments for his Position, he is more busie to shew how kind His Party have been to *Monarchy*, and that the unkindness which men of their Perswasion shewed to it at the beginning of the War, (when they would have reduced it to the Royalty of a Duke of *Venice*) did arise from other Causes, that lie at the bottom. That they declared against the Murder of the late King, and acted vigorously for the Resstitution of His Present Majesty. I for my part would be glad to believe, and therefore leave others to contradict it ; and there are some in the world that do no less for this Authors Party, then he hath done for the Papists ; that is, take of all their Pretensions on this ground, to the kindness of the King. If they be friends to *Monarchy*, they are not very happy, and few know of it ; for there is no Prince, that we have had since they were known, but have thought otherwise of them, and given them such Characters as no man would have given to his Friends : When he saith, that the *Anti-Puritan Interest*, as occasion serves, can contest with Kings, and pretend Conscience too ; If he means this of the Church of *England*, he is not able to give an Instance, and an Accusation without a Proof is but a Slander. If he meant it of the Papist ; Why doth he urge it against us ? for they do as all other Sects do.

But he would not have these things repeated ; for he saith, *Acts of Indemnity*, should be also *Acts of Oblivion*. I hope he would not have us lose our Understandings, as well as our Memories of what was done. The Act did not intend this, that bound us, not to Remember to Revenge ; but yet Reason would have us Remember to a Caution ; that we come not to the same Miseries, and that is best done by considering what is past.

In *Sect. XXI.* he considers this Latitude in respect to the Interest of the Church, and Clergy. In this Consideration he first Commends the *Non-Conformists* ; and having shewed how far

far they agree with us, he saith, *The Ministers of this Perswasion are Godly and Learned, able, and apt to teach the People, and no small part of the Congregations in England feel the loss of them.* We are not to wonder that he assigns so great *Virtues* to Ministers of his own Perswasion: It hath been the practice of old, for every Sect to be immoderate in the praises of their own Party: Nay, it is very rare, if they do not impale all that is praise-worthy to themselves, so *Tertullian* observed of the Schismatics in his time: *Proficiency in Virtue was no where so easie as in the Congregations of those that revolted from the Church, for to be among them was to be de- quàm in Castris serving.* But let it be true concerning some of them, as I *rebellium ubi ip- believe it is; yet we do not take it as an evidence that they are so, nor that they are the more so, because they scruple the Injunctions of the Church.* Besides, even Godly men may and have been through some *Infirmity, Prejudice, or Mistake,* through want of *Experience* in the ways of *Converse*, or through *Implicity* of heart being obnoxious to the arts of other men, and so made their properties for some strange designs: Such persons, I say, may and have been the Causes of great Disturbance to the Church. Which men, had they kept themselves in their proper Sphears, might have been thought the Blessings of their Generation, and such as the World was not Worthy of. But forcing the Bounds of their own private Condition, endeavouring to set up *Unpracticable Forms* of Government, or Imposing upon others; have set the World in such disorders, that they have been deem'd the Pests of their times. Thus the *Religious men* that lived a devout Life in the *Sorons. l. 8. Desarts of Egypt,* while they kept themselves in their Cells, *c. 11.* had the admiration of all that knew them; but when their Weakness had betrayed them to that gross *Hereſie* of the *Anthromorphita*; and they would by a Seditiion impose their Opinion upon the Bishop of *Alexandria*, they were then a reproach to Christianity, and a trouble to the World. The case of *Savonarola* at *Florence* was the like, while *Guicciardin Hist. l. 3.* he kept himself to his own duty in Preaching Repentance to the debauched *Italians*, and severely taxed the *Corruptions* of the Church of *Rome*, he had a reverence

due to him; and did much good in his place. But when he did seem ambitious of, or at least not decline, the esteem of a Prophet; and did endeavour by the Authority he had got, to change the form of the Commonwealth, and therein to regard more the Interest and humours of his Party than the Publick good; he met with the Publick hatred, and fell as a disturber of his People. Thus Godly men may be the Causes of the publick disquiet; their *godliness* makes them not *Infallible*, nor fit for *Government*. Which if they aim at without, or against a Lawful Authority; the Church may reject them lying under such Circumstances, and answer the Lord of the Harvest, with the direction, one of his Chief *Shepherds* St. Paul hath given, *Mark them that Cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine you have received, and avoid them.* But how will they answer the Great Shepherd, for having declined the feeding his Sheep only for *Trifles*, (as they call them) *i. e.* things not unlawful, yet Commanded by the Magistrate his Substitute, and the Church his Spouse? let them think upon that dreadful Account with horror.

In the next place he charges the *Bishops* with more crimes than he could number *virtues* for his own friends; but the best of it is, he cannot prove them. And he was sensible that he could not, for he doth not downright affirm them but as Impotent women vent their Passions, he insinuates them by many malicious, and implying Interrogations; as 1. *Whether the Bishops and Dignified Clergy, and those of their Perswasion can believe, that the Church of God in these Nations is terminated in them alone?* No, they do not believe it: for it is even hoped by them that *Christ* hath a *Larger Interest in these Realms*, and according to their hope they admit those very Dissenters to the *Communion* of the Church. But observe where this Author places the larger Interest in Christ, that is, in *Non-Conformist Ministers*, for they only are debarr'd from the Opportunities of the Ministry. 2. He asks, *Whether it shall be said of the English Prelacie, that it cannot stand without the ejection of Thousands of Orthodox Pious Ministers?* Men may say what they please, if they never think of giving account of every idle and false word, but they have no reason to say so; For the English

Prelacie

Prelacie is the greatest encouragement of Orthodox, and Pious Ministers, that ever Protestantcy saw: and hath had the Testimonies and Observance even to sufferings, of far more exceeding Number of Thousands, then ever their Adversaries could be accounted. Do but compare those many thousands that were undone by the Covenant, with those few that did not Conform; and then it will appear but an empty boast to talk of their Number. Howsoever neither *Episcopacy*, nor any Government Civil or Ecclesiastical, can stand if it do not secure it self, by frustrating the attempts of those that Plor, and contrive against it.

How great a slander it is to say, *That Prelacy dreads Knowledge in the People*, I have shewed before: and I never heard of any but this Author that had that *Maxim*, *No Ceremony, No Bishop*. How worthy had it been for this Author to have proved, that the *Bishops did fear the Preaching of Indubitable Truths*? but this can no more be proved, than that *his Party are Peaceable*. The *Established Clergy* refuse not their Brethren, if they will come to joy in the Work of the Lord, and give but Security that they will be Peaceable; all the *Emoluments* of the Church are obvious to them. Thus I have shewed how false are all these Slanders.

After these most false Accusations of the Bishops and Clergy, he proceeds to shew how weak their *State* is, which he saith, *Is not advanced by these present Rigors, nor more rooted in the hearts of the People*. To this we answer; That it is no wonder that a Form of Church-Government should meet with many Difficulties, in its return after the *Proscription* of twenty years. For in that space, some hundred thousand Souls that were not born before, or had not before come to the use of their Reason, must needs be tainted with a prejudice against it, by hearing nothing almost from the Pulpits but *Investives* and slanders of it. And it is no easie thing to rase out the first *Impressions* that are made upon the mind. Besides this, it was not to be expected, but that the *Restitution* of that Church should vex all those whom the *Ruins* of it had made rich. And that when they were to *Disgorge* what they had *Sacrilegiously* devoured; they would also vomit out all their Choler, empty their Spleen, and vow an eternal hatred against those that recalling their own Pro-

prieties reduced them to their former Wants, and confine them again to their ancient narrow homes. Add to these all such as are Cast from their *Power*, broken in their *Fortunes*, disappointed in their *Hopes*, by the return also of the *Civil Government*. Which when they dare not *directly* oppose, they think they may with more security oppugn by assaulting the *Ecclesiastical State*, that is a prop and support of it : who hope to Wound the King through the sides of the Church ; and are therefore more industriously and designedly malicious against her. Others there are who *provoked* by some *unkindnesses* of particular Church-men, rail at all. Some that cannot get the *Promotions* of the Church, are angry with those that have them. Many that like *poor* Ministers of the Church of *England*, do yet envy those who have no necessity to crouch before them. The *Spirit of Contradiction*, the Variety of *Changes* in the late Times ; the small *reverence* that People have for Governours, (contracted by being used to speak against the *Usurpers*, who had no right to their Affections) have so far corrupted the Common Conversation of this Nation, that every Party which is uppermost cannot escape their reproaches, and hatred. And the *Arts* of the Sectaries to thwart, discourage all endeavours to Uniformity ; to slander all those whose Offices, or Parts are most obstrusive to them, (for there is not a man of such escapes the dirt, they can sling) is not the least cause of the slow progress. All these considered, it cannot seem strange to an Observing person, that *Prelacy* drives but heavily. It must be a Generation or two, not seven years, that can wear out all these Difficulties. All this doth not take off from the Intrinsic Worth of *Prelacy*. Whilst on the other side, *Presbytery* languished almost as soon as it had a being, *Erastians*, and *Independants* baffled it in the Assembly, which was its Cradle, and proposed it to a Publick scorn. Therefore it is imprudently done for them to upbraid us of Weakness, who themselves could not keep their standing for above two or three years.

The Particulars by which he Remonstrates our weakness are either *unavoidable* : as what remedy can there be if the *Latitudinarians* *Indifferent men*, and *Conforming Puritans* do not Conform in the Implicity of Spirit as becomes the Ministers of Christ.

Christ. We can have no greater Security than the Faith of men. Or else are common to all persuasions, as to *have some among them that are a reproach unto the whole*, whose behaviour may *dis-*
gust other. And we can never hope while the Church is on Earth, that it will be free from all Corruptions. We are sure the number of such among us are far less than what the Dissenters represent, who condemning the most unblameable, will not be very shie in mis-reporting those that are not so strict as they should be. Therefore neither of these sorts ought, nor can debase the *Intrinsic State of Prelacy* in the minds of Wise and Good men.

As to the Question, *If the Affairs of the Common-wealth should go backwards*, (I hope they do not intend to drive it that way) *Can the Clergy alone be at rest in their Honour, Power and Wealth?* We answer no, and we do not desire it. We cannot do, as the several Sects of Dissenters did, make our *Addresses* to every Usurper, *Congratulate* every New Form of Government, *BlaspHEME* the Providence of God for their sakes, and pray for every one *that had killad, and taken Possession*. No, we cannot do it, we must fall upon the same Scaffold where *Monarchy* bleeds to death, and be buried under the ruines of the State. You know we did so, and you may be sure it will be so again. No Party nor Church doth more strictly assert the necessity of *Allegiance* to Princes than the Church of *England*.

He doubts of the truth of that Observation, *No Bishop, No King*; which the late practices have made as evident as the day. But (he saith) *It is not evident, that the present frame of Prelacy, hath an Immutable Interest in the Regal Name and Power*. The Doctrines which *Prelacy* maintains, in opposition to *Presbytery*, have so much Truth, and are so much for the Safety of Kings, that we cannot imagine they will be so unkind to themselves as to suppress them. And the Kings of *England* have seen so many reasons to hate *Sacrilege*, that we cannot fear they will take away the Revenues of Bishops, and therefore we think the *Prelacy* has as *immutable an Interest in the Regal Power*, as the *Regal Power* hath in them.

In the last place, after he hath said, *That the Religion of any State must be held up by its Venerable Estimation among the People,*

People, and that must be the reality of Devotion and Sanctity, (which is a very great Truth.) He sincerely (as he saith) wishes well to the Clergy, for which we as sincerely thank him; but then he adds these three Conditions.

I. That *Bishops must not be the head of Ignorant, Lewd and Scandalous Ministers, &c.* This we think also they ought to take care of as much as they can. But yet if such get within their *Dioceses*, the fault may not be theirs. For they are bound up by the Laws, and it is not with them as with the *Triers*, that had as absolute a Tyranny as their Masters had over Ministers, and might reject whom they pleased without any account. But now if *Patrons* present Unworthy Persons, which have the *Qualifications* the Law requires, the Bishops must not reject them. Nor can they as *Committees* turn a Minister out of his Living at their Pleasures, but must give an account to the Laws.

The Second Condition is, *That by their management the Sound Knowledge of God may be increased, that Holiness and Righteousness may flourish, &c.* This also we acknowledge to be their Duty, and if they do not perform it sincerely, God will require an exact account of them. But as to this they are much hindered by the Obstructions which Dissentions make, and being distracted by the perverseness of those that are without, they cannot be quiet, to look after those that are within the Church.

But the third Condition is the main thing the Author drives at, *The Settling the Church in a due Extent.* If the Extent here spoken of, be to Comprehend all the Different Perswasions, and Contrary Opinions, this they cannot do, it is contrary to the Duty which Bishops owe to God and Man, to permit Errors, and embrace a Communion with Darkeness. But if it be meant of an Extent and Comprehension of Persons that have laid aside those false Perswasions, and will now contend together with Bishops to feed the Flock of Christ, and to preserve the Unity of it. This Bishops ought to do as their Interest, and the Interest of the Gospel, (from which theirs cannot be separated). And this the Bishops have done, and are ready to do. For all men know how willingly they have *Instituted* those to Livings, who before had been the Enemies of their Order: how they have invited into their Order, and the Church Preferences, those that have preached and writ against them, and we

want

want not any Examples that they have been sincere in their Tender, for some have really received what was offer'd; and we should have had more, had not their followers hinder'd them by minding them of their own former Doctrines. And in this our Bishops testified themselves to be of that Peaceable Temper of the Primitive Bishops. For the Catholick Bishops Melchisedes of Rome, and others of *Africa* offer'd to the Donatists, that if they would joyn themselves to make up the Unity of the Church, they would give them Communicatory Letters, although they had been Ordained by the Donatist Bishops; and that wheresoever there were two Bishops, one of the Catholick Part, the other of the Donatists, yet he should be first Confirmed that was first Ordain'd, which soever it was: and that the other should be provided for elsewhere, or else the survivor should succeed in the same Church. And when the Donatists objected to the Catholicks, that they covered and took away their Livings. St. Augustine answers, *Would to God they would become Catholicks, and then let them possess not only what they call their own, but also what soever is ours, in Peace and Charity with us.* This is a Latitude which the Church did allow, and which the Bishops are now ready to admit. Aug. Ep. 162.

The third Interest which is that of the Nobility and Gentry, which in *Self. XXII.* he endeavours to reconcile to his Latitude, which he thinks they may dislike, as that which will render the Citizens and Commonalty, and all sorts more Knowing, and less Servile. Here the Author goes upon two mistakes. 1. That this Latitude will make men more Knowing, which I have already shewed it will not do; for instead of building up men in the Knowledge of Christ, it will fill them with empty notions of their Way and Party, so * *Terullian* * *Terul.* observed of the Hereticks of his time, *What shall I say of their de Præc. c. Preaching, when this is their business, not to Convert, Unbelievers; but to subvert those in our Communion.* 2d. Mistake is, That the Nobility and Gentry do not like the Commonalty should be knowing. This is the same Suspicion he raised of the Clergy, that they were afraid of the Diffusion of Knowledge; and this is so unworthy an Humor, that I cannot think Noblemen and Gentlemen inclinable to it. But he says, that by being knowing they will be less Servile, and less Obsequious to the Wills of Great men. The Laws of England secure every man from Servitude; the poorest Cottager is a free-born Subject, and therefore as the Nobility and Gentry cannot expect the slavery

Clem Rom.
Ep. ad
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of Citizens and Commons: so they cannot dislike their knowledge upon this only account, that it makes them more free. But this Author conceals the true Cause: why this Latitude should be dreadful to the Nobility and Gentry; which is, that it will increase Factions and Dissentions in Religion; and where they Reign there is not that Respect and Reverence given to Persons of Honour, as is due to them. For *Clemens Romanus* minding the *Corinthians* of the sad Effects of their Dissentions, puts this as One, *The Base rose up against the Honourable; and the Vile against the Noble.* And they may well remember how often they were affronted and slighted by mean Persons in the times of the late Toleration. All that the Author saith upon this head, is some Politick Observations, but nothing to the purpose.

He concludes in *St. XXIII.* *With the General Security that comes by this Latitude, in which he supposes the Common Peace may be settled in this Comprehensive way; which he neither hath, nor can prove, nor will (as he dreams) the Necessity of Powers, and proceedings extraordinary be taken away by it, but rather encreased.* For no Nation doth tolerate Dissentions in Religion, which hath not a Standing Army to restrain the Effects of it, as appears in Histories of Antient times, and in the Practices of modern Nations: And therefore this is it which more needs those ways and means as they trouble them who are tender of the Lawful Rights and Liberties of English men, than the enforcing the Laws upon Dissenters, which may be done by the Ordinary Civil Power. We are not to be Frighted with what he saith, *That the Severities of Laws against Dissenters may at length come home to them, or theirs, who are for the Execution.* For we are to do whatsoever is found necessary for the Safety of the Church and State, and leave the future Events to the Providence of the God of Peace. We know that *the more peaceable we are at Home, the more Powerful we shall be abroad.* But we also know that Licensed Dissentions will always persuade our Neighbours that we are Weak. It is well known, how foreign Writers have observed Our Ruine might be easily wrought by the Puritans, who did Dissent from the Publick Establishment: They are not to be accounted Disturbers of the State, nor of their own House, who follow the Advice of the Wisest King, *To fear God and the King; and not to meddle with those that are given to Change: For their Calamity shall rise Suddenly.*

FINIS.

